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Healthy Reflections for the New Year.

THE HUMBLE WEED.

How in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,

Little flower—But if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

NOBILITY OF LIFE.

Cease every joy to glimmer on my mind;
But leave, oh! leave the light of hope behind.

This is not thy home!

CHAUCER.

THE VALUE OF TO-DAY.

So here hath been dawning
Another blue day;
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away?

Out of eternity
This new day is born,
Into eternity
At night doth return.

Behold it aforetime
No eyes ever did;
So soon it for ever
From all eyes is hid.

Here hath been dawning
Another blue day;
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away?

T. CARLYLE.



PLATO MEDITATING BEFORE SOCRATES, THE BUTTERFLY, SKULL, AND POPPY.
[The Portrait of Plato is copied from an exquisite gem of high antiquity in the British Museum.]

What higher aim can man attain, than conquest over human pain?

For Health and Longevity, use Eno's 'Fruit Salt.'

WHAT EVERY TRAVELLING TRUNK AND HOUSEHOLD IN THE WORLD OUGHT TO CONTAIN,
A BOTTLE OF ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.'

A Mahomedan Munchi during the great Mohurram Festival and Eno's 'Fruit Salt.'

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I am, Sir, yours truly, A LIEUTENANT.

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Prepared only at ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' WORKS, LONDON, S.E., by J. C. ENO'S PATENT.

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To aid Nature without force or strain, use ENO'S 'VEGETABLE MOTO' (a simple Vegetable Extract), occasionally a desirable adjunct to ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.' They perform their work 'silently as the twilight comes, when the day is done,' and the patient is much astonished to find his bilious attack, &c., has completely fled before the simple and natural onslaught of the MOTO. You cannot overstate their great value in keeping the Blood pure and preventing disease.

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

JANUARY 1890.

Virginie.

A TALE OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

BY VAL PRINSEP, ASSOCIATE OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY.


'Juste Ciel ! éclaire ce peuple malheureux pour lequel je désire la liberté. Liberté ! Elle est pour les âmes fières qui méprisent la mort et savent à propos la donner ; elle n'est pas pour ces hommes corrompus qui, sortant du lit de la débauche ou de la fange de la misère, courent se baigner dans le sang qui ruisselle des échafauds. Elle est pour le peuple sage qui chérit l'humanité, pratique la justice, méprise ses flatteurs, connaît ses vrais amis, et respecte la vérité. Tant que vous ne serez pas un tel peuple, ô mes concitoyens ! vous parlerez vainement de la liberté ; vous n'aurez qu'une licence dont vous tomberez victimes chacun à votre tour ; vous demanderez du pain, on vous donnera des cadavres, et vous finirez par être asservis.'—MADAME ROLAND.

CHAPTER I.

THE COURONNE D'OR.

IN all the pleasant environs of the great city of Paris there is no pleasanter-looking place than the little town of Sèvres. Situated about half way between the capital and the former abode of Royalty, Versailles, with the high road between the two forming its long straggling main street, in the pleasant summer the houses seem embowered in trees. For after you pass the old bridge across the Seine and ascend the long hill the woods of St. Cloud stretch for miles on the right hand, on the left those of Meudon. The road itself, though steep enough, is sunk between two higher eminences that rise on each side above even the tall old houses of the town. On the right, as you leave the

river, lie the celebrated Royal Porcelain works, now Royal no longer. Higher up the hill, on the other side of the road, is a quaint, old-fashioned little church, on which is still to be seen the

celebrated double L interlaced () which formed the Royal monogram of Louis XV., as though even the House of God required the same mark that gives a priceless value to the porcelain of the time.

Though the houses of the little town are most of them the same now as they were 100 years ago, the tawdry eating booths that now line the river's bank, where the Parisian Jules or Alphonse of to-day offers a Sunday *déjeuner* to the lady of his affections, did not exist, and the steep street was not smoothed by the art of the great Macadam, but was paved with irregular blocks of stone. At the entrance of the town, half way between the Porcelain works and the little church, on the left-hand side of the road coming from Paris, where now there is a large communal school, there stood a thriving hostelry, with its mighty sign swinging before its hospitable doors; and as anyone who had eyes, without knowing how to read or write (if he were a Frenchman), could tell, the name of that hostelry was the 'Couronne d'Or.' For such a crown was depicted on that sign as satisfied the wildest idea of the most imaginative, a crown on which the boys of Sèvres firmly believed there was more gold than existed in the strong boxes of all the shops in this town, or even for the matter of that in Versailles itself. The memory of man, in some things so very faulty, could not go back to the time when there had been no Couronne d'Or, and to the same dim past would the antiquarian have to wander to trace the connection between the mystic sign, the hostelry, and the family of Le Blanc. He who could read, and there were many such, could without difficulty decipher the name, also in gold, beneath the crown:

‘JACQUES LE BLANC—TRAITEUR.’

Whether it was from a love of tradition, or, perhaps, to render it useless to alter the sign in which they firmly believed, it is a fact that all male Le Blancs for several generations had received the name of 'Jacques' at the baptismal font, as the curious may discover by many an old tablet in the neighbouring church.

Sèvres itself was not more proud of its celebrated Royal Porcelain manufactory than of its hostelry, at which those who

passed between Paris and Versailles could procure an excellent change of horses, or, if they cared to linger on the way, first-class cheer and comfortable lodging. The 'Grand Monarque' himself in the good old days of his youth and success had more than once stopped before its door for a cup of wine, and Maitre Le Blanc was wont to show with considerable pride the cup of pure silver which had been used by the King and reserved ever since for Royal lips alone. So well known was this silver tankard, that the fame of it reached the Court of Louis XV., and Madame de Pompadour, one day driving through Sèvres, persuaded her Royal lover to stop his coach as he was passing the Couronne d'Or and demand a cup of wine, as had done his Royal ancestor. The Jacques Le Blanc of the time, an old man, with tottering knees, brought forth the precious goblet, and, as he handed it to the courtier whose duty it was to place it in the Royal hands, he said—

'Sire, this cup having been honoured by the use of your Majesty's great-grandfather, has been ever since reserved for Royal lips.'

'Maitre Le Blanc,' said the King, 'a cup so honoured should be sacred.' Then raising it, he added, 'À la Couronne d'Or,' and drank a hearty draught. 'My friend,' he observed, giving back the tankard (always through the hands of the obsequious courtier), 'let the crown protect the cup for the King's use,' and he pointed to the goodly sign that swung before the door.

Maitre Le Blanc saw traces of disappointment and displeasure on the painted face of La Pompadour. *She* had not been asked, as she had hoped, to partake of the Royal draught. As the good man bowed low on receiving his treasured goblet from the hands of the attendant lord, he heard the King remark lightly to the baffled favourite—

'Wert thou not athirst, ma chère? If so, let us requisition the "Service of the Day."'

What she answered Le Blanc did not catch. The door of the great coach shut with a bang, the steps were put up, and the great vehicle, with its eight horses, lumbered over the uneven pavement of the main street of Sèvres, followed by the coaches of the Royal retinue. Inside, report said, all was not peace. When in the course of time it rolled up to the door of the château the courtiers remarked that the King passed from the coach into his palace without a word, and the favourite's eyes were red, even through her cosmetics. The cup was kept untainted, but King Louis came no more to the Couronne d'Or.

Since that day it had been the fashion for all the great nobles to stop at the celebrated inn. For in these things men, and especially courtiers, are like sheep. When the bell-wether jumps over an obstacle the whole flock will leap in the same place even though the obstacle be removed. So the great bell-wether of society having drunk at the Couronne d'Or, Duc and Marquis, Comte and Viscomte, all thought it their duty to slake their thirst at the same place. The fashion continued long after the original actors were departed. For now the monarch had changed, and two generations of Le Blancs had followed their august sovereigns to another world, in which, they were told, but hardly dared believe, king and subject would be equal—and still the Couronne d'Or flourished. What mattered the troubles of this year 1789? People went to Versailles and returned to Paris whether M. de Maurepas or M. de Calonne or M. l'Archevêque were in office. Nay, the more changes the greater number of travellers; since every fresh change brought with it a host of new hopes, new aspirations, new men. The road from Paris to Versailles came over yon old bridge and up the street of Sèvres past the Couronne d'Or, and gay gentlemen and gayer ladies still sought favour at the fountain-head of honours, where now ruled Louis XVI., most excellent of men, and Marie Antoinette, gayest and most fantastic of queens.

Sèvres was, therefore, right to be proud of its Couronne d'Or—a long pile of buildings, on the Paris side the inn proper, on the side towards Versailles the vast range of stables comfortably hid behind a long wall. Everything—inn, stables, and wall—wore a well-to-do, thriving look; the windows bright and clean, the very stones carefully whitewashed, contrasting favourably with its neighbours, where many panes were wanting in the dirty casements, their place supplied with paper or rag, and where the walls too often showed the mark of neglect and age, time with ravaging hand having torn down the plaster, and supplied its place with its own favourite covering—moss, lichen, and mildew.

So Maître Le Blanc was a much envied man as he stood there at his door, now gazing with indolent pride at his well-known sign, and now glancing with keen business eye up the street towards Versailles, or down the street across the bridge towards Paris, on the look-out for custom. A tall, stout man, with ruddy face and eyes that twinkled with good humour when pleased, but one whose temper was of the hottest and whose tongue was of the sharpest when he was contradicted or put out. Ill fared it

with a servant of the Couronne d'Or if Maître Jacques caught him or her remiss in their duties, for a notable man was he, careful of his own interests. Spotless was his white cap, spotless his white coat, spotless his linen apron tied neatly over his well-to-do paunch. In the girdle was stuck his sharp-pointed knife that glistened spotless in the bright May sun. In fact, from his white bonnet to his neatly stockinged legs and buckled shoes, he was the *beau idéal* of a landlord who was not above his work, but gloried in his reputation as a 'Cordon Bleu,' who could serve up as good a dinner as any man in Paris.

'*Tiens*, Rousselet,' he cried to a passer-by with a clear voice and merry laugh of greeting, 'how goes it with thee, my friend?'

The passer-by, a dapper, neatly dressed man, a good deal younger than 'mine host,' but whose thin, seamed face made him look older than he really was, stopped opposite the speaker and lifted his hat to wipe his heated forehead.

'Not well,' he grumbled; 'our friends yonder,' nodding his head in the direction of Versailles, 'get ever deeper in the mire.'

'Thou art too much of a politician, friend Rousselet,' laughed the jolly Jacques; 'to every dish its proper seasoning. Thou canst not make a *pièce de résistance* of ortolans, or a *soufflé* of the best haunch that ever came off fat buck, therefore what business is it of ours what they do at the château? It is their duty to look after the State, as it is thine to paint pretty pots and vases, and mine to keep things going at the Couronne d'Or. Amateurs spoil the best dishes. As in the *cuisine*, so in politics. You must know your ingredients before you can produce anything passable. No, no,' he added, sententiously shaking his fat face, 'let them be and live quietly, that's my receipt.'

'Ah,' answered the other, 'live as we can, till die we must. Thou and the majority so believe and will believe till you are roughly wakened.'

'Thou art ever so,' cried Jacques. 'Tis thy liver, or thy spleen, thy inner man, that causes thee discontent. I, God be praised, am of a happy disposition, and care not that,' here he showed the smallest possible part of his fat thumb, 'for anyone, provided I am left alone. Comest thou this evening to have thy say out, friend Rousselet?' asked he, breaking off in what he had thought he could make a fine pretext for a speech, on catching sight of some custom coming from Versailles.

'Yes, I come,' said Rousselet, '*à bientôt*, my friend,' and with his usually sour expression he went his way. Passing up the

street he saw two brightly clad young men clatter by on horseback and draw rein at the door of the Couronne d'Or. Jacques, cap in hand, was ready to hold their stirrups as they alighted, and, bowing, showed them the way into the house.

'Fool,' grumbled Rousselet; 'he thinks those gay sparks come to partake of his *cuisine*,' and he drew his hat tight on his head and clenched his fists as he went on his way.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING JACQUES LE BLANC.

MAÎTRE JACQUES deceived himself when he said he had no care for anyone. In that he was not singular. Who can truthfully say this? What man that lives is so independent of his fellows? Yet we are all fond of bragging of our independence, hoping thereby to deceive the world as we do deceive ourselves. It is a game in which the player knows no one will call on him to make good the amount of the stakes, and so he can, and generally does, raise them at his leisure. Who has not played it, with infinite satisfaction to himself?

Jacques Le Blanc had one absorbing, engrossing care—his daughter.

Twenty years before our worthy host had been *chef de cuisine* in a very noble family, and had there fallen in love with Virginie Potier, who was a kind of *protégée* of his noble mistress, half lady's maid, half companion, expected to be always in attendance on her mistress, and treated with humiliating condescension by the titled frequentees of the house. Virginie was a singularly attractive woman. She was therefore exposed to the insulting advances of every man, young or old, who claimed the privileges without troubling himself with the responsibilities of the *noblesse*. Being set above them, she incurred the displeasure of the upper servants, who formed a class and kept a table of their own. The meekness with which she performed her duties had often been noticed by Jacques, whose generous nature was revolted by the insults that were heaped upon her, and when some of his fellow-servants talked lightly one day of Virginie, Jacques not only gave them the lie, but threatened them with personal castigation if ever he heard a word to her discredit. As Jacques was a stout and very strong man, who had already proved his prowess on more

than one occasion, he succeeded in silencing his fellows, at least in his presence. His chivalrous conduct, distorted by passing through several unsympathetic channels, in due time reached the ears of one of the family, who straightway spread the tale and even ventured to twit the cold and disdainful Virginie with her conquest of the amorous *chef*. So the generous sympathy of her almost unknown admirer became a means of additional humiliation, but it also afforded a strange consolation to the solitary girl to know that there was one man who disinterestedly took her part, and was ready to fight her battles. Unconsciously she smiled on Jacques, who for his part ceased not to admire, never dreaming that mademoiselle could possibly entertain any feeling towards him but gratitude of that kind to be repaid by a passing smile or a kind word. At length, Jacques overheard two of the members of the noble family laughing at the pretensions of the cook and slightly coupling his name with hers. To treat these young sprigs of nobility as he would have treated one of his equals was not to be thought of, in those days, when a deep line separated the *bourgeoisie* from the *noblesse*. Yet he would not allow, for one moment, this woman, whom he humbly admired, to suffer from his presence at the château. He therefore at once demanded an interview of Madame la Marquise, who ruled over the establishment of the Marquis de Boisseac, and whose patronage had maintained Virginie in the house. On permission being granted, Jacques boldly entered the noble presence, cap in hand. The Marquise was sitting as usual at her embroidery; by her side sat her pretty companion, book in hand. Virginie, who had risen on Jacques' appearance, would have left the room, had not Madame detained her.

'Stay where thou art, child,' said the *grande dame* pettishly, without even turning a look in the direction of Jacques; 'what is it you would wish to say, Le Blanc?'

'Madame, I demand pardon for intruding,' said Jacques hesitatingly, twisting his cap in his hands; 'I have come to request Madame to search for my successor.'

'What!' cried the Marquise, turning towards him her keen eyes for the first time. 'Impossible! We are quite satisfied with your talents. We have never been better served. I must insist on your remaining.' This fine lady was greatly addicted to the pleasures of the table, and, though she prided herself on her extreme elegance and refinement, viewed the satisfying of her somewhat jaded appetite as the principal occupation of her day.

'Still,' said Jacques, 'I am forced to demand that Madame would deign to accord me permission to retire from her service.'

'Nonsense,' cried the Marquise; 'sit still, child, why do you fidget? Nonsense, Le Blanc. It is some question of salary. Monsieur will, no doubt, at my request, consent——'

'Pardon,' interrupted Jacques, 'if Monsieur doubled my salary I could not stay.'

'What excuse have you for this conduct?' asked the Marquise, striving to restrain her temper.

'I am not at liberty to say, Madame. I am not dissatisfied with my place. The service of Monsieur le Marquis has been a pleasure to me, and Madame herself has been kind enough to commend my humble efforts. Yet, Madame, being a free man, I demand permission to leave.'

Madame la Marquise grew pale with rage—perhaps it was partly consternation, for what person, male or female, can afford to lose the gratification of a favourite pleasure, especially when they have reached that time of life when pleasures are few?

'Virginie,' she cried, 'knowest thou anything of this? I insist on knowing, girl. Sit not there with that innocent smile on thy lips. Is what I have heard true? Has this man dared——'

'Madame, Madame,' interrupted Jacques imploringly, 'be not unjust, and you, Mademoiselle, pardon me for the insults I have innocently brought upon you.'

'What impertinence!' screamed the Marquise.

'Believe me, Mademoiselle,' continued Jacques, paying no attention to his irate mistress, 'it was to spare you the reproaches I hear have been heaped upon you on my account that I have made up my mind to go. I have done my best to give the lie to these reports. Madame la Marquise has herself showed me that they have reached even her ears. Let me then leave, that Mademoiselle may regain the favour of Madame. What am I, or the likes of me, that the happiness of such a lady should be one moment disturbed?'

The Marquise had been speechless with rage.

'Leave the room,' she cried, ringing the bell violently, 'I'll have you turned out of my house. And thou, wretch!' turning to Virginie, 'go to thy own room and wait there till I determine what shall be done with thee.'

But Virginie, who had risen from her low chair, stood pale and still a moment. Then to the great lady's astonishment she walked to Jacques Le Blanc and took him by the hand.

'You are a brave man,' she said in a low voice, 'and a generous man. You are leaving here—you shall not go alone. Take me with you. Among these, in this family, I receive nothing but distrust or insult; with you I shall be safe from both. Let me then go with you, if you care for one so helpless and friendless as I am.'

La Marquise was dumb with astonishment, and even Jacques was so taken aback and bewildered that he stood speechless. The groom of the chambers entered the room. The lady pointed to the pair.

'Baptiste!' she shouted, 'have those two turned out of the house at once. Shameless girl! is it for this I have treated thee as an equal all these years? Thou and thy paramour shall pack together this instant. Why do you stand there like a fool?' she said to the servant. 'Turn them out, I say.'

But Jacques had recovered himself.

'Madame,' he said, 'need be under no anxiety as to our departure. Mademoiselle Virginie is under my protection now, and please God she shall not repent of her choice.'

He offered his arm to the girl, and bowing with the air of a grand seigneur he left the room with Virginie.

Thus Jacques Le Blanc won his wife. He took her home to his father, the host of the Couronne d'Or, successor to the grey-haired Le Blanc of the Louis XV. episode, himself now past the prime of life, and husband and wife were soon absorbed with the business which on the death of the father devolved on Jacques. Before this event occurred a daughter had been born to the two, whom they called Virginie after the mother. This little one was idolized by her parents. How they marked her dawning intelligence, noting with pride each first laugh, first recognition, first crow of delight, as though there had never been a baby in the world before! When the child learnt to walk Madame Le Blanc would sit during the summer in the garden pretending to work, while she watched the tiny thing at play; and Jacques would thrust his honest face through the window, unmindful of pot and saucepan, and make grotesque and comical noises to attract his daughter's attention. There never were two people more happy. Jacques was so proud of his wife, of her beauty, her superior intelligence—nay, even of her being his wife—that his sharp temper became quite changed under her benign influence and his quick tongue forgot to scold. Madame Le Blanc was content with the

worship of this simple, honest fellow, whose every effort was to please her.

Alas! their happiness lasted but too short a time. When the little Virginie was seven years old, Madame Le Blanc died. Hers was a painless death, a quiet fading away, till the time when her last breath was so faint that the moment of her final passing away was unperceived by those around. Prostrated with grief, it was long before poor Jacques recovered himself sufficiently to discharge his ordinary duties. Little Virginie was his sole comfort. With her he seemed to live in the society of his lost wife. Yet, poor man, he had faithfully promised she should not be brought up at the Couronne d'Or. Madame Le Blanc, a woman of superior education, was anxious her daughter should receive more advantages than were ordinarily afforded to women of her class. She had an elder sister who was a nun in a convent at Chartres, with whom she had already carried on a correspondence as to the education of her daughter. It was to this convent, to which was attached an excellent school, that Jacques had promised to send his little girl. It was a dreadful grief for him to lose her. He would be doubly bereft without wife or child. It was as death to him. But the faithful fellow never for one instant dreamed of breaking his promise. Within six months of the death of his wife he started with his daughter for Chartres. He prattled with the child all the long hours of the journey, and when they arrived in the afternoon of a fine August day at the door of the convent, when they actually stood in the parlour, and he handed over to his sister-in-law, who was called La Mère Sainte Ursule, her little niece, the brave fellow could still smile.

'Adieu, my little Virginie,' he said, somewhat huskily; 'these good ladies will make thee a pious and good woman like—like thy mother'—here at length he broke down, but turning to the sister he added apologetically, 'See you, she has but so lately been gone'; then, having vigorously blown his nose, he tenderly kissed his little girl, and, laying his hand on her head, left the room.

It was only when the great door of the convent swung behind him that he fairly broke down. He stood in the golden twilight and leant his head against the cold wall that kept him from his little girl. 'Thy will be done,' he murmured. Was it her will, or the mightier will of the Ruler of the Universe? The angels of Heaven, if they looked down on him, would have forbore to inquire.

Jacques Le Blanc returned home heart-broken. The Couronne

d'Or would have been a misery to him, lonely as he was, had he not had an object for which to live and work. He was too unselfish to let his own feelings master him where the welfare of his child and the fulfilment of his promise to his departed wife were concerned. So he set to work with a stout heart to put by crown upon crown for his little girl. What did his loneliness matter when she was happy and contented? What if her education were expensive since his wife had wished it? He had no doubt in the wisdom of her judgment. He was content to wait. Only once a year he made a pilgrimage to Chartres to see his dear one; and, as he found year by year she was growing into womanhood, his heart filled with pride. Alas! it was not un-mixed with anxiety.

'*Ma foi*,' he said to himself, as he turned away from the convent gates when his daughter was a tall girl of fifteen, 'my Virginie is a beauty. Not one of those I see going up to Court—no, not even the queen herself—is to be compared to her. She shall want for nothing. Jacques Le Blanc, she will find, is no pauper, and will pay a pretty *dot* for his daughter. But where shall I find a man fitting her?' His brow clouded as he thought of the people who frequented the Couronne d'Or, and the danger she would be exposed to even under a father's eye. What a responsibility! Ah, well! the time was far off yet.

But the time approached. He had originally intended she should leave the convent on her seventeenth birthday, but as that day drew near she had begged to remain a little longer. She had made some pleasant friends at the convent and they invited her to visit them. Nothing loth, Jacques agreed to her request, for he was not ready to receive his daughter. Reminded by her letter of the flight of time, which he like many other busy men was apt to forget, he set to work to furnish a little suite of rooms for her, far from the public part of the inn, where she would not be disturbed. Never was a lover more particular in arranging for the comfort of his beloved. Everything that he could purchase pretty or dainty he placed there. In his choice he was much aided by his friend Rousselet, who was one of the artists employed in the neighbouring Royal Porcelain manufactory. Of late years this man had become intimate at the Couronne d'Or. He had listened time after time to the story Jacques was only too glad to tell of his marriage and of his misfortunes. He had heard all that Jacques knew of his daughter, her beauty, her amiability, and her goodness, and now that this daughter was

coming home, many a consultation the two had together as to the furnishing of these rooms, and much good advice did Rousselet give, till at last he became as keen about it as Jacques himself.

At length towards the end of autumn Jacques received a letter from his daughter, in which she informed him that her visits were at an end, and that she was ready to come home. 'For,' she said, 'I feel, my dearest father, that I have too long neglected you, and have determined to devote myself for the future to your happiness. It has been most sadly selfish of me not to have thought of you all these years. You will, I know, forgive me; you, who are so unselfish, can afford to forgive the selfishness of others. It will be a joyful moment for me when you write to me "Come," or when you show me that kind face of yours and take me home. Come soon.'

That evening with tears in his eyes Jacques showed this letter to Rousselet. What was to be done? The rooms in spite of everything were not ready, and besides, though Chartres was only some six-and-forty miles away, the rains had made the roads so bad that the journey was a dangerous one. Better to wait a little longer till the spring came. So thought they both, and so Jacques wrote to Virginie, and they set to work with a will to complete their pleasant labours.

At length the month of March arrived, when the spring was already showing itself in hedgerow, wood, and field, decking the cold earth with a wealth of golden flowers, and causing the sap, pent up by the winter colds, to course down the slender twigs and swell the tiny buds, till they burst forth into tender green shoots. Then was the room completed—a very gem of a room, fit for the pearl Jacques was to place in it—then one morning Jacques himself, in his best clothes, with a chuckling laugh delightful to hear, shouted his '*à bientôt*' to Rousselet from the *banquette* of the Chartres diligence, and rolled on towards his precious girl, the happiest of men.

On the afternoon of the next day, be sure Rousselet was there, when the diligence from Chartres drew up at the Couronne d'Or, and he it was who handed the graceful girl from the inside of the clumsy vehicle.

'Ah!' cried the excited Jacques, as he stumbled out after his daughter: 'Ah, *mon ami*, I knew thou wouldst be here to receive us. Virginie, my child, this is thine old friend, Rousselet, the best of men, and this is thy father's house, my little pet. Rememberest thou the old place? Pierre, Joseph, Paul,' shouted

he, 'where are ye, ye lazy dogs; take your mistress's boxes and beware of awkwardness. Come, my child, let me show the rooms we have prepared for thee. I say *we*, for friend Rousselet has had much say in the matter. Come thou too, my friend, that we may enjoy the pleasure of showing our little nest to our pretty bird.' So laughed and chatted the happy father, literally dancing with pleasure round his child.

Rousselet was indeed astonished at the change in Virginie. When he first came to Sèvres, now twelve years past, he remembered Madame Le Blanc, a pale invalid, and Virginie, a large-eyed, rather delicate little girl of six. But here was a really beautiful young woman. She was tall and graceful as a queen. Her nose was straight, tending slightly towards aquiline. Her eyes were large and with pupils of soft velvety brown; her eyelids were well marked and almond-shaped. Her eyebrows were arched and rather raised, giving a sad look to the expression of the upper part of her face. Her mouth, of a rosy healthy colour, though somewhat large, was so beautifully shaped, as rather to gain than lose by the emphasis caused by size. Her chin was round and well formed, while the whole was encased and framed in a wealth of brown hair that fell in golden masses on each side of her long and slender neck.

Her complexion was so clear and transparent that Rousselet could not help thinking the shell-like blush on her cheeks was a sign of delicate health. It was a peculiarity of Virginie that, while the upper part of her face was sad, the lips and dimply chin had a merry and arch look.

With a winning smile she held out her hand to Rousselet and said, 'I have heard much of you, M. Rousselet, from my father. I am sure we shall be great friends.'

But Jacques impatiently seized his daughter's hand and led her into the house. He would not allow her to linger and admire the great kitchen, or central room, with its blazing hearth, and rows of bright saucepans all arranged according to size against the wall. He merely waved his hand, with the air of a grand seigneur, as he cried to the assistants and servants there assembled:

'Pay attention. This is your young mistress, my daughter; see that you hurry up when she calls.'

And himself led her up the staircase in the corner of the vast room, up two floors; then pausing, with beaming face he turned to her, and naïvely cried, with his hand on the handle of the door;

'Thou art so beautiful and good, I know thou wilt like thy rooms, which have cost a deal of thought to prepare.' With these words he threw back the door, and paused to watch the effect produced on his daughter. There were two rooms: the outer one decorated in the style of the time with pretty stucco ornaments, and furnished with handsome buhl cabinets. A dainty inlaid table stood by the windows, on which was placed a beautiful Sèvres *jardinière* filled with fresh spring flowers. The chairs were covered with light blue satin, and the carpet was rich with floral decorations on a blue ground. The windows of this room looked over towards Paris, with the old bridge and winding river in the foreground. The inner room, which looked out on the garden of the inn, was decorated also in white and blue, and contained a dainty bed with blue satin curtains.

Virginie was delighted with the rooms and their fittings, which contrasted favourably with the somewhat austere simplicity of the convent where she had spent so many years of her life.

'Oh, father!' she cried, 'who would have thought thou couldest have known exactly what I liked and admired? See, little father,' she added, putting her hands on his shoulders and kissing him, 'even to the flowers all is perfect.' She ran lightly to the Sèvres *jardinière* and leaned over the flowers, burying her face in them. 'The sweet spring blossoms that I love so much,' she murmured.

Jacques scratched the side of his nose. 'I—that is we—have worked hard to please thee,' he said, 'but the flowers—I should not have thought of them—they must be due to Rousselet, and see the beautiful vase in which they are! He painted it for thee himself. The Queen has not a better. Ah! what a man is Rousselet! He knows everything! Why comes he not?' and Jacques moved towards the door.

'M. Rousselet,' said Virginie, 'probably imagined we should wish to be alone.'

'Ah, the good fellow! Possibly he wished me to have all the credit. Did he think me so base? Nevertheless, it is the best man I ever met.'

Then Jacques, who was dying to see to his own business, and whose master-eye had detected several things below that were not as he wished, kissed his daughter affectionately, and, bidding her make herself quite at home, descended to his duties.

First he donned his spotless white costume, and, as he threw a glance in the glass and saw his honest red face and menial

apparel reflected therein, for the first time in his life it seemed distasteful to him. He could not help contrasting it with the elegance of his daughter.

‘What will Virginie think of me in this costume?’ he thought to himself. ‘Well! she perhaps recollects—and after all it must be worn.’

Then he descended to the kitchen, where, having given a sharp reprimand to several of the servants who had taken the opportunity of his absence to neglect some trifles, he entered the little room in which he was used to spend his evenings with Rousselet over a quiet pipe. There he found his friend in his usual place. He placed one hand on his shoulder and, leaning the other heavily on the table, said:

‘I do not ask thee what thou thinkest of her: she is perfect.’ Tears stood in his honest eyes. Rousselet himself was grave and silent. With the effusion of feeling so common to the French the two friends embraced.

Deep down in the heart of both these men was the same conviction, which neither would have dared to express, and that conviction was that Virginie’s place was not at the Couronne d’Or.

CHAPTER III.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

THE advent of Virginie made but little difference in the routine of life at the old inn. Had Jacques wished it she would have done her best to perform those duties formerly undertaken by her mother. But Jacques did not wish it. He had been so long the entire ruler of the establishment that it would have been irksome to him to have anyone, even his daughter, sharing his authority. And Virginie herself, it must be owned, was little qualified by her education to superintend the management of the business. She had been accustomed to a life of study and quiet, and was frightened by the bustle and noise of so busy a place, so she kept herself much in her own room, and occupied herself with her books and music, appearing only at meals, which Jacques now partook with her in a room apart, and not, as heretofore, in the vast kitchen. It was a pretty sight to see these two together: Jacques in his white clothes and with his ruddy *bourgeois* face—Virginie tall, elegant, and well dressed. That her father worshipped

her could be well understood. For him too she had that love and respect which goodness feels for its like. She felt his love in everything around her, she appreciated his simplicity and honesty, yet she could have but little sympathy for his calling and way of life.

Jacques, being entirely engrossed in his occupations, was in fact relieved to find his daughter was content to efface herself, the company found at the Couronne d'Or being sometimes of the class which showed but slight respect for the feelings of a father, viewing a pretty girl as a natural and legitimate prey.

During the first days of Virginie's stay at the Couronne d'Or, after the hour of *déjeuner*, about midday, the father and daughter sallied forth together. The good man took a delight in showing his daughter the resources of his establishment. He would linger in the kitchen with pardonable pride, for there he found himself thoroughly at home, and notwithstanding the want of interest she felt in the culinary occupations of her father, Virginie was willing enough to delight the good man by well-merited praise of the order and cleanliness that there reigned. Then, Jacques talking noisily the while, they would sally forth into the garden. The alterations she suggested there, the planting of flowers and general beautifying of the place, which had become, during Jacques' sole occupancy, too much crowded by vegetables, received his warm approval, and directions were immediately given for the requisite change. Then they would wander into the stables, but there Virginie was less happy. The close smell of the horses, the noise and bustle of the stablemen, were alike distasteful to her. Jacques was short and imperative in his language to the men, nor were the expressions he used, to which the others seemed well accustomed, altogether acceptable to his daughter.

On Sundays Jacques went with Virginie to the little church with the royal monogram on its tower. Though himself anything but devout, he listened to the service with commendable reverence, and was pleased to see the attention shown towards him and his fair child. It must be owned that after the mass was over he was eager to get back to his duties. Sometimes even during the service he was restless in the remembrance of some order not given, or some trifle neglected, but, on the whole, he behaved with the decorum to be expected from so well-to-do a parishioner.

When the day's work was over, and Jacques retired to his sanctum to smoke his evening's pipe, Virginie would join them,

and sometimes, at her father's request, sing some of the simpler songs of her 'répertoire' which did not require accompaniment. To the two men, smoking silently, this music was the source of great delight. Neither were musicians, but Jacques' heart was filled with pride to find his daughter possessed of an accomplishment which gave him such strange and unaccountable pleasure, and Rousselet was both moved by the music and pleased with the opportunity of gazing at this beautiful creature without appearing rude. Then, after this singing, Virginie would take up her work and listen to the news from Versailles. She had heard but little of the outside world in the great convent. She was entirely ignorant of the state of France at the time. She knew there was a king, Louis XVI., and a beautiful queen, but beyond that at the convent she had heard nothing. The political troubles of France had nothing to do with the course of history taught at Chartres. She heard of them for the first time from Rousselet, who was an ardent reformer and democrat. The theories of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the 'Contrat Social,' the inherent rights of man startled and surprised her. That all men were equal in the eyes of God she believed; but she believed that the king was the Lord's anointed, and that honours and titles coming from him were also given from Heaven, for the good sisters had taught her that the first social duty of a Christian was to render obedience to the powers that be. Were we not told to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's? So it happened that Rousselet inspired her with a vague terror, and that the more he strove to explain his theories the more she revolted against them. Yet they seemed so plausible that she was irritated to think how little she was able to confute the new doctrine.

Happily her father was on her side. Not that he argued much. He was very fond of talking, and would discuss eagerly, but argument and logic were not in his line. With the confidence inspired by success in life, with the ease that personal comfort brings, he put such things on one side.

'Friend Rousselet,' he said one day, emphasising his words by a movement of his long pipe, 'what thou say'st may be right.'

'By heavens, it is right!' broke in the fiery Rousselet.

'I do not say nay,' quoth Jacques; 'it is, however, but theory. The world has gone on so long on the other tack, and things have so often righted themselves, that I am content to leave the result to time. These are words of thine—mere words—we cannot fill our insides with words alone. Be practical. One little bird

on the spit is worth all of those which flutter and sing on the trees. Is it not so, my Virginie? Speak thou, my child; thou hast learnt much all these years—say what thou thinkest.’

Virginie paused in her work, and, in her sweet, clear voice, but in a strange precise manner, said :

‘I have been taught differently, my father. I understand not this new doctrine. That all men are equal before God I admit. But He has placed them, in His infinite wisdom, each one in his sphere, and given each his allotted station in life, in which each ought to act according to the divine law; not envying his neighbour because he is richer and more powerful, but doing his duty to him and by him, as to all mankind.’

Tears stood in Jacques’ eyes. ‘My daughter!’ he cried, as he embraced her with pride.

Rousselet said no more. His was one of those stern natures that, with Spartan heroism, repress and restrain all show of outward feeling. All his life he had been solitary and silent, except on the one subject of his country’s wrongs, on which he felt it his duty to speak up on all occasions. He was just the opposite of Jacques, who was emotional in the extreme, and whether he was influenced by passion, or touched in his feelings, was ever ready with his tongue or his tears. Perhaps it was the contrast between them that led to their close friendship. Jacques knew that Rousselet hid a tender heart under his rough exterior, and Rousselet, in the exuberance of his friend’s emotion, somehow found a relief for his own pent-up feelings.

But this silent, solitary nature was in reality very human. Since Virginie’s arrival he had grown to love her, not with the passionate unreasoning of youth, but with a stronger and more lasting feeling, in which the artist was as much concerned as the man. For Rousselet, although only a painter on porcelain, had all the feelings of an artist. To him Virginie was the realisation of all his ideals. Like a figure in a masterpiece by one of the great artists of the past, she appeared perfect in beauty; and when now this angelic being, whom he adored, would not understand the gospel of Jean Jacques, when she spoke up, as a saint would have spoken in the old time when such things were possible, Rousselet could only gaze with admiration. Somehow, notwithstanding his own convictions, he would not have had it otherwise. This old-world faith became her. It seemed a part of the glorious whole, inferring a holiness, a purity, a serenity, ever found in the very highest ideal of art. It would have been a pity to disturb

this simple faith. Could he supply anything in its place? Would not this glorious work of art suffer—be less complete, less adorable? So Rousselet held his tongue. When in subsequent discussion with Jacques he advanced any extreme theory or upheld any unorthodox doctrine, he condescended to put the objectionable theory or doctrine as coming from some one else, making a sort of apology for the opinion he himself held to be the truth, lest it should offend her. Alas! so far as he was concerned the harm had been done. Virginie evidently shunned him. Sometimes she absented herself entirely from the evening's talk; oftener she only came for a few minutes, and, having sung a few of her father's favourite songs, bade them 'good-night,' making some trivial excuse for her retirement.

Before this, however, the day's routine had been insensibly altered. Jacques was often so busy that he could merely spare time, after the morning's meal, to rush into the garden.

'It is well, is it not?' he would cry; 'are thy orders obeyed, my child? Do these blockheads understand what thou wantest? Do what thou thinkest best, *chérie*! Only tell me if thou requirest anything. Thou wilt excuse me, *n'est-ce pas*?' Then he would kiss her with a hearty smack and rush back into the house, red and eager, shouting directions even before he reached the door. Sometimes even this short relaxation was impossible, and he would accompany his daughter only as far as the door.

Then his visits to church became more irregular. Sunday was a busy day. 'Ah!' he would shout, saucepan in hand, 'thou goest to mass? It is well, but there, things have to be seen to, and I have had no time to dress. Well—next Sunday we will see!'

Next Sunday there was even more to do. Virginie got used to going by herself, and, being left much alone, was wont to wander to the little church during the week also—for to her religion was a necessity, and she was never so happy as when she was engaged in her devotions.

This was Virginie's life at the Couronne d'Or. Her father had warned her not to wander far from the house. She knew nothing of the woods around, though she often longed for their pleasant solitude, where she felt she would not be so much alone as in the midst of the bustle of the great inn. She recognised, however, the wisdom of her father's warning, for she had already, even in the short distance she had to traverse from home to

church, been treated with but scant civility by some of the passers on the great highway to Court and fortune.

Was Virginie happy? At first, yes. The love of her father, the affection which seemed to anticipate her every wish, satisfied her. Without this adoration she could not have lived, for she had been accustomed to it at the convent, where she had been always petted and made much of. Moreover, the pleasant occupations she found in her prettily furnished room (in which be assured there was a piano of the newest fashion), the pleasures of the garden, now bursting into the glories of early summer, and, above all, the interest given by the feeling of home and proprietorship, all brought contentment for a time. But, as summer came, and she grew familiar with these things, time began to hang somewhat heavily on her hands. She missed the companionship she had found at the convent, where she had many friends of her own age. Youth requires youth. Notwithstanding her love of solitude and her fondness for meditation, she sometimes grew weary of herself, her books, and music, and longed for the merry laugh, the vivacity and gaiety, nay, even the confidences, of the friends she had left at Chartres, which, while she was there, she had been in the habit of despising. Nor had she been without her little romance, her first dream of love. What girl, however safely guarded, escapes? The gay Lothario who audaciously scales the garden wall, or even the unguarded window of his victim, is not the only person to be dreaded. The village Corydon, making vulgar advances to the domestic Phyllis, sometimes excites the heart of the well-watched maiden who, herself unseen, may witness their transports; sometimes even the unconscious Cimon whistling down the street, innocent of love himself, may rouse an amorous flame. Who knows under what disguise the wicked little god may present himself? Of poor Virginie's sweet dreams of love we shall hear by-and-by. She did her best to forget. Are such things forgotten? We laugh in after years at our first passion, we make a jest of our early loves, but we never forget them. And Virginie was not one to love lightly.

So it came to pass that Virginie spent much time at her window, her work neglected in her lap, gazing wistfully over the fair scene, following the windings of the bright river which, now lost behind some wood or undulation of the ground, now gleaming in the light, seemed to lead her thoughts to the distant life of which she was so ignorant, to the great city throbbing and seething with these new and strange ideas, which frightened her, but of which

she would fain know more. Perhaps in that distant Paris was the man she loved. As she gazed, the mist seemed to gather between her and it, separating her from the scene, blotting it out entirely, till she started from her reverie and found it was her own tears that blinded her.

The keen observant eye of Rousselet often caught sight of her as she sat thus absorbed in thought at her window, and it seemed to him that the girl was changing, getting pensive and less cheerful—her soft cheek losing its faint colour. It was evident to him that her life lacked something. Ah, could he hope to supply that want? Could it be that love would bring back those roses? Love for whom? Maddening was the thought to poor Rousselet that it was not for him. He did not deceive himself. How could he hope for such luck? Had he not seen she avoided him—shrank from him—perhaps hated him? For a time he did delude himself with the idea that it might be female companionship that was wanting, and he persuaded Jacques, who had perceived no change in his girl, and was horrified to think that she was not completely happy, to get Virginie a maid to wait upon her. So a rosy young girl, one Louison Chaplin, was engaged, whose constant chatter amused her, and for a time all went well again. Only for a time, however, for again came that wistful look, again the reveries at the window. Poor Rousselet!

Both he and Jacques had soon other and, if possible, greater cause for anxiety. The presence of a beautiful girl at the Couronne d'Or could not be concealed. She did not show herself in the house, she saw at once that her presence was a cause of embarrassment, but she was innocent of all offence, and had not an idea that her appearance at an upper window could bring trouble to her anxious father. Many a gay courtier passing through the street of Sèvres, and seeing the fair girl at the window of her room, would rein up his horse, or stop his coach at the door and make some excuse to enter. To all inquiries Jacques would make a courteous but evasive answer.

'The lovely lady? Who could she be? Surely not my daughter, though she had to be sure the good looks of the family. M. le Marquis would honour his house by partaking of a cup of wine?' or 'M. le Duc knew the partiality of a father—yes, my daughter is good-looking, but with even a father's partiality I can recommend better my excellent Bordeaux, a wine, Monseigneur, without its equal in France.' He would speak with a good-natured smile and with apparent carelessness, but the quick eye

watched the effect of his words, and to one of Jacques' experience the seeming indifference of some of the great gentlemen was even more to be dreaded than the evident annoyance of others. For many of these ducs and marquises were not accustomed to be thwarted, and held the lives and honour of those below them as matters of small consideration. Soon the great kitchen was frequented by a number of suspicious-looking men with the appearance of officers of the army somewhat fallen into the shade, who were most inquisitive as to the inhabitants and occupations of the hostelry. All this told greatly on Jacques' temper, which since the death of his wife, and his consequent solitude, had returned to its former state of irritability. Soon it became almost unbearable to the domestics of his household. His tongue was heard all day in shrill expostulation, which even penetrated to the distant room of his daughter. But she had always found him so full of kindness, and so gentle withal, that she failed to recognise his voice in the shouts of abuse and even oaths that frightened her.

CHAPTER IV.

AN INTRODUCTION.

AMONG the gay sparks who adorned the Court of Versailles was a certain hot-headed, scatter-brained Viscomte de St. Aubray. Hardly more than a child, he was still up to all boyish pranks, and delighted in incredible follies worthy of a school-boy.

Alighting one day at the Couronne d'Or in consequence of the lameness of his horse—which he had galloped from Paris—St. Aubray was amusing himself by watching the bustle in the great kitchen, and contriving with the mischievousness of a monkey to delay and hinder all he could. While engaged in this foolish occupation he saw Virginie pass through on her way from the garden to her room. Impelled by his audacity, he, without hesitation, advanced towards her and with a courtly bow said :

'Mademoiselle, or madame, it seems to me you have dropped something.'

Virginie looked round with a smile.

'Monsieur deceives himself,' she answered.

'Nay, by my word,' cried the delighted boy, 'you have dropped the most bewitching smile that ever beamed on man.'

The action of this lad, as he placed his hand on his heart, and darted an amorous glance at her, so tickled Virginie that she burst into a merry peal of laughter, that tinkled away into the distance, as she ran lightly up the stairs towards her room.

St. Aubray, who was up to every devilry, would have quickly followed her, but a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder.

He turned. It was Jacques Le Blanc, his lips tightly set, and his eyes twinkling ominously.

'Pardon me, Monseigneur,' he said slowly, 'that is the private part of the house, to which strangers are not admitted on any terms.'

'Strangers! I have no wish to be a stranger—faith I'll be an old acquaintance at once, and so enter where others dare not tread,' and once more he moved in the direction of the stairs. Jacques Le Blanc nimbly threw himself in the way.

'Pardon me again,' he said.

'*Sapristi!*' cried the boy, 'a moment more and I will not pardon you.'

'Monsieur, that lady is my daughter.'

'Daughter, wife, or mistress, what is it to me? I've a wish to cultivate her acquaintance, and by heaven I will! So stand aside, old wineskin.'

Again the boy tried to pass. This time Jacques fairly lost his temper, and seizing the young fellow by the collar of his coat and his arm, half lifting, half dragging, he had him through the door into the street before he had time to recover from his astonishment.

On seeing the prospect of a row one or two of the military gentlemen in the kitchen ran to the door, where, as the day was warm, several others of the same class were already assembled. Jacques pushed the Viscomte well into the street and then, with great presence of mind, managed to shut his own front door and lock it. He was just in time. St. Aubray, quickly recovering himself, dashed up the two or three steps, down which he had been thrust, but only to receive the weight of the door, which before he could prevent it was safely locked.

He turned, white with rage, towards the military-looking gentlemen.

'Messieurs, you have seen how I have been treated; aid me to revenge myself. I am not ungrateful,' he cried; 'come! down with the door,' and he threw himself passionately against it.

'My good sir,' quoth a vicious-looking man, with a vinous

nose and a blind eye, 'do not waste your energies. If you wish to force the door we will soon have it down.'

'Down with it then,' cried St. Aubray, beating the door impotently with his small fists.

'In ancient times,' said the elder pedantically, 'they employed an instrument called the battering-ram. In these days, it is true, the petard is more employed; yet——'

'Curse you and your petard! have the door down I say!' cried St. Aubray, furiously interrupting.

'Then,' said the other, 'let us employ the battering-ram. Gentlemen,' he said to the half-dozen loafers at the door, 'aid me with that seat.'

Against the wall of the house was a rude heavy bench. The men raised it in their arms, encouraged by St. Aubray, with wild shouts of joy. Receiving their time from the one-eyed warrior they rushed at the door, which, stout oak as it was, shook on its hinges at the mighty blows it received. Several blows had been struck, and the door began to yield, when a crowd of men was seen approaching from the stables of the inn and the town of Sèvres itself, where Jacques Le Blanc was much respected. Already cries of 'Au secours!' were heard in the distance, and men were seen running towards the scene of the fray. St. Aubray drew his sword and faced about. 'Down with the door,' he cried; then turning to the crowd he shouted, 'The first man who interferes I kill.' What the result of this broil would have been it is impossible to say. The people of France, in those days, were easily roused, and when roused their vengeance was terrible.

The crowd assembled was growling ominously, when the clatter of horses' hoofs was heard and shouts of 'Make room, make room.' The crowd parted. A young man attended by a groom appeared. Leaping off his horse he advanced towards St. Aubray.

'François,' he cried, 'this is one of thy boyish tricks.'

Bang went the bench again. The door shook on its hinges. The new-comer, taking in the gravity of the situation, hastily dashed up the steps and with a mighty wrench sent the one-eyed warrior flying one way, while with a side push he upset several of those tottering under the weight of the battering-ram, so that that weighty machine fell partly to the ground.

The one-eyed man raised himself from the ground, swearing dreadfully, and was preparing to rush at the new-comer when the latter cried:

'Excuse me, gentlemen, for interrupting you in your pretty

sport, but if you cast your eyes around on the crowd assembling you will perceive the danger you run. Believe me, a swinging from the neighbouring lantern iron is not pleasant for any gentleman's feelings.'

The young man spoke half in jest, but his hearers appreciated the justice of his remark.

'Monsieur has some reason,' remarked the one-eyed man, shaking the dust from his clothes.

Meanwhile the stranger conversed for a few minutes with St. Aubray, then advancing towards the crowd, he harangued, and, after some difficulty, succeeded in persuading them that no harm was intended. He then returned to the military gentleman.

'Monsieur,' he said politely, but with great firmness, 'I have, I hope, averted a catastrophe. My young cousin here is a hot-headed boy, for whom his youth is some, though not sufficient, excuse. But you, Messieurs, what would you, who have served his Majesty, say when you were had up before the authorities? Or if these good fellows of Sèvres had set on you, being a hundred to one, what use would your well-known valour have been?'

'It was only an escapade, a freak, such as any gentleman might engage in without forfeiting his self-esteem,' said the one-eyed man.

'Capitaine Pinard,' said the stranger sternly, 'should be the last to wish to appear before the head of the police.'

'*Diable!*' cried the one-eyed, 'how came you to know me? Who on earth are you?'

'I am the Comte de la Beauce, and I happen to have served in the body-guard of the King.'

'Gentlemen,' said the one-eyed, 'Monsieur is master of the situation—our place is not here.' Cocking his hat fiercely and bringing the handle of his long sword within the reach of his hand, this warrior swaggered towards the stables, where he was followed by the other warlike gentlemen, who appeared to be mostly under his orders.

Left alone, La Beauce turned to his cousin, and placing his hand affectionately on his shoulder he said kindly:

'I wonder when thou wilt have learnt a little wisdom, François. Thy escapade to-day, if it comes to be talked about, will destroy thy prospects at Court, where the *mot d'ordre* is to flatter the people. Do thou, therefore, jump on my man's horse, and make the best of thy way to Versailles. I will arrange every-

thing here, so that I hope nothing need be heard of to-day's work.'

St. Aubray, who looked like a guilty school-boy in the presence of his elder, took him by the hand.

'Étienne,' he said, 'thou art always my good genius. I did but resent being expelled from a public inn—no great crime surely.'

'And what was the cause of thy expulsion, my worthy cousin?'

'A woman,' said the boy, 'the prettiest girl I ever saw—the daughter of old Le Blanc.'

Le Blanc? The name was familiar to La Beauce, but there were so many Le Blancs in France.

'Jump up, foolish boy,' said he, and, helping his cousin on the servant's horse, he saw him depart. As he cantered through the dispersing crowd, more than once he heard threats, but he laughed gaily, and his youth and good looks stood him in good stead, and no one laid hand on him.

Watching the departure of his cousin, the Comte de la Beauce stood for a few minutes uncertain. He glanced at the great sign swinging before the door. There was depicted a monstrous gold crown, and beneath it was written 'Jacques Le Blanc, Traiteur.' The Comte's heart beat quickly, but he showed no outward signs of emotion as he turned towards the old inn, and mounting the steps that led to the battered door, knocked gently.

'Open, good friends,' he said in a cheery voice. Still no one dared to draw back the bolts. 'Open,' he cried again; 'there is no danger now. The hang-dog ruffians have all gone, and I, a stranger, am alone.'

One of the frightened servants at last plucked up courage to approach the door, and, having certified that he who knocked spoke the truth, boldly undid the bolts, crying valorously, 'Where are the villains?'

La Beauce without a word advanced into the middle of the kitchen and demanded to see 'Maitre Le Blanc.'

And where was Jacques?

When he had succeeded in shutting the door he turned, breathless and pale with the unwonted exertion, and glanced round the room. He was, in fact, calculating like the wise commander of a beleaguered town the forces he could muster. There was silence through the vast chamber, interrupted only by the feeble blows of St. Aubray, but of those inside none showed the least desire

to fight in his cause. Slaves make, they say, poor soldiers, and these, who were humble slaves to the will of Jacques, cowered white and pale, as now the heavy blows produced by the extemporised battering-ram resounded on the stout panels of the door. Would the door resist? It was his only chance. Alas! the hinges creaked ominously, and the beams that strengthened the panels already showed daylight. Slowly then Jacques withdrew, and, as he retired up the stairs towards his daughter's room, he drew the long knife from his girdle and felt its sharp point.

He calmly opened his daughter's door, entered, shut it, and stood there with knife drawn and set look, waiting in this his last retreat.

Virginie, who happened to be in her bedroom, had been disturbed at the knocking outside. She entered her boudoir as her father appeared. He was frightful to look at, pale and determined, with his large knife firmly clasped in his hands.

'Father,' she cried, 'what is it?'

But he waved his hand to keep her off.

'Silence,' he hissed.

Pale and mute as a statue, she too stood immovable.

The knocking had ceased. Was the door down then? The father clenched his knife tighter and set his mouth. They hardly breathed. The suspense was terrible; though it only lasted for a few minutes, it seemed to them, in that daintily furnished room, as though hours had passed. At last voices were heard calling for 'Maitre Jacques.' 'It is all right,' cried the shrill voice of Pierre, the youngest of the cooks, 'Maitre Jacques—they are gone, there is no one here but a polite Monsieur who wishes to see you.'

Then Jacques trembled and dropped his knife, and Virginie, as though released from a spell, rushed forward and threw her arms round her father.

'My child,' he half sobbed, 'thou art safe! I would have killed him on the threshold to have saved thee.'

But now there were loud cries for Maitre Le Blanc, so Virginie, never asking a word of explanation, took him by the arm, saying: 'Come, father; fear not for me—I am safe by thy side.'

Arm in arm the two descended the stairs. Somehow, as they entered the great kitchen Virginie drew back, and Jacques found himself alone before a handsome young stranger, who, hat in hand, addressed him.

'Monsieur Le Blanc,' he said, with a quick glance at Virginie,

who stood spell-bound at the door, 'the silly boy who has caused you all this alarm is my cousin, the Viscomte St. Aubray, well known, alas! for his mad tricks. Luckily I, who had been outstripped in the ride from Paris by this young scatter-brain, arrived before any damage had been done, except to your stout front door. And I come in his name as well as my own to offer our united apologies for the fright we have caused you.'

He who spoke was a tall, well-knit young man of about twenty-eight. He had a strikingly handsome face, on which truth and honesty were strongly impressed.

Jacques overcome by his words could only stammer:

'Monseigneur—my daughter——'

'Ah, Mademoiselle is your daughter,' said La Beauce with strange earnestness. 'Mademoiselle will pardon the chance that brings me here, and also, I hope, forgive the follies of the boy, to whom I am anxious to bear the joyful news that his escapade has been forgotten.'

'See you, Monseigneur, I have but my daughter. How then could I escape anxiety when I saw the persistence of Monsieur?'

'Monsieur Le Blanc,' said La Beauce, 'your feelings do you honour. Allow me to hope that my request is granted,' and he held out his hand.

Jacques took his hand and cried with some feeling:

'Say no more, Monseigneur. I thank you for your generous interference. But for you, lives might have been lost.'

'Adieu, then, Monsieur. Mademoiselle, may I venture to say *au revoir*? I go to my cousin to convey to him the gratifying intelligence that all is well.' With a courtly bow La Beauce left the room, and shortly the hoofs of his horse were heard clattering over the stones of the street.

He had spoken with the extreme politeness of his class, and no one, not even Rousselet, who had entered during the scene, could have suspected that he had already met Virginie at Chartres, and that his one object since she had left that city had been to find out her abode!

Had Rousselet been in the room when Virginie entered it, his jealousy might have been aroused by her hesitation, and still more by the tell-tale blush that appeared on her cheek at the sight of this man. Happily she escaped detection, so great was the interest excited by the interview between La Beauce and Jacques, and by the time Rousselet arrived she had become pale as a lily, a colour naturally attributed to the alarm she had undergone,

Jacques, when he went forth to examine the damage done, cast a rueful glance at his door. His appearance was the signal for some applause from the crowd of neighbours there assembled. In his gratitude for their assistance, which was rather too late to be of much avail, he produced a barrel of wine, in which they drank his health, and swore to defend him against those aristocrats. Thus did Jacques add to his popularity—but from that day black care was in his heart.

CHAPTER V.

AT THE CONVENT OF THE VISITATION.

WHEN Jacques bade adieu to his daughter at the convent at Chartres she was so astonished that she forgot to cry. It had seemed strange to her to hear that her mother was dead. She was so young that she could form no just notion of death. When it was impressed upon her that she would never see the dear one again, her infant mind was exercised only by the idea of this desertion. There was no one to explain the terrible truth to the poor child, for her father's grief was so excessive that it was beyond his power to talk on the subject. But Virginie in the midst of her tears understood one thing, that her father at least was there. So she threw her arms round Jacques' neck and kissed him, sobbing in her infantine language :

‘Cry no more, Petit Père. Maman is very cruel to leave me, but thou wilt always be with me, wilt thou not?’

It is easy to imagine poor Jacques' answer. All the way down to Chartres he had talked of the good ladies who were to bring her up and teach her, and make her good, but the sad father had abstained from mentioning the parting which her stay at Chartres necessitated. So when he hurriedly murmured his words of adieu, it was not at once borne in upon her that she should not see him again. Only when the door shut did she realise this, and she then started up crying, ‘Petit Père, go not away as did Maman!’

Then a curious thing happened before the eyes of the astonished child. The tall statue-like nun whom she had somehow associated in her child-brain with the great God, and the Beloved Mother, to whom she had been taught to say her prayers, the solemn figure which had stood with arms folded while her father was there, answering in a sweet low voice when spoken to,

and then only in monosyllables, suddenly seemed to take life. She sunk to her knees and snatched the child to her arms, and Virginie felt her lips tremble as they touched hers, and the warm tears fell on her cheek!

'Child,' sobbed the nun, 'thou bringest back thy mother to me; I remember her a little girl even as thou art. She has bequeathed thee to me, and thou shalt be to me as a daughter.' The nun's hood fell back from her head in the act of embracing the child, and Virginie as she gazed at her—at first with terror—was startled by the likeness to her mother. Her mother saddened and grown older, not with the pale transparent look she had acquired during her years of patient suffering, but yellowed and more unearthly-looking, yet with a look of intense goodness and sweetness. So when the good creature took the little girl to her arms and comforted her, and told her how she would always love her, Virginie quickly grew to have no fear. The *Mère Ste. Ursule* was used to children and could talk to them in a way they understood, and in a few moments she had explained more than poor Jacques had been able to say during the weeks that had elapsed since the death of his wife. She told the little girl how her mother was an angel in Heaven, whence she could look down and watch over her child, and how her dear father had left her at the convent for her good, to be brought up a good and virtuous woman, even as her mother had been. Little Virginie, listening to her, grew to confide in her as though she had known her all her life. Thus they sat and talked till the dim twilight set in, and a great bell tolling roused the *Mère Ste. Ursule*. 'It is the Complines; come, my child, let us join the sisters in the chapel.'

She took Virginie by the hand and led her through some long passages, now nearly dark, and across a dimly lighted hall, and finally into a chapel in which the evening twilight made a pleasant gloom, causing the candles which twinkled among the decorations of the high altar to shed a soft golden glow, rendering doubly mysterious the forms of the kneeling sisters, and the tall columns which went up, and up, till they seemed lost in the soft darkness of the roof. The child knelt by the side of her aunt in a kind of ecstasy, in which were strangely mixed the long journey, the parting with her father, her aunt's talk, the priest's robes and confused murmur of the voices of the congregation. When the service was over, she having sunk in a half sleep of fatigue and confusion, the kind nun, taking her in her arms, carried her upstairs, undressed her, and put her to bed without rousing her.

She woke the next morning to the noise of chattering children; she started, and sat up in bed. On three other little beds were three other little girls, of about Virginie's age, one on her side of the room and two opposite, who were laughing and calling to each other.

'*Toi*—Marie, thou art but an idiot,' cried the one immediately opposite, 'I tell thee it is a new-comer. Mère Ste. Ursule brought her last night after we were asleep.'

'The old fox, not to tell us!' cried Marie in the next bed.

'It is shameful to have a stranger brought by stealth,' cried a third. 'She ought to have been presented to us.'

'See—the new-comer—she wakes,' cried the first, and as Virginie sat up in her bed, they all sank back on theirs as though they were asleep. But curiosity was too powerful in these daughters of Eve. Marie, who had her bed next to that of Virginie, opened her eyes stealthily, then, raising herself, cried, 'All the same I say it's stupid not to know even her name. How do they call thee, little one?' She was about the same age as Virginie, yet she spoke to her as though she were already an old woman.

'My name is Virginie Le Blanc; what is yours?'

'Marie Delile,' answered the saucy minx. 'She is pretty and has large eyes,' she cried to her friend across the room.

'Le Blanc,' grumbled one of the others. 'Not aristocratic, Le Blanc!'

'When didst thou arrive?' cried the other.

'Last night,' said Virginie, 'I don't remember when. I was so tired, la Mère Ste. Ursule, I think, put me to bed.'

'Ste. Ursule! I said so. I heard the old cat, though she does move with velvet foot.'

'She is my aunt,' said Virginie indignantly.

'Niece of Ste. Ursule—hence the Le Blanc,' cried number two of the other side with contempt.

'Her name was Potier; what's yours?' asked Virginie.

'Jeanne Marguerite Noel de la Ville Evêque,' said the little girl with pride, pronouncing each name distinctly, and with absurd emphasis.

'What a mouthful!' exclaimed Virginie simply, at which the others laughed, and Marie cried:

'She is good, this new-comer; let us be friends.' And she reached out her hand, and Virginie doing the same the two with difficulty, and only by balancing themselves out of bed, succeeded

in bridging the hiatus that separated them and touching each other's fingers.

At that moment a bell rung and the little girls sunk back on their beds, while Virginie, still unused to the ways of the place, remained sitting up, wondering at the sudden silence. Soon, however, the door opened and a nun appeared.

'*Mes Demoiselles* awake!' she cried. 'Mademoiselle, the newcomer, art thou already awake? It is time to rise and dress.'

The little girls all pretended to awake, and with many a forced yawn, as though they were just roused, got out of bed and began to dress.

'See,' whispered Marie to Virginie, 'it is not permitted to gossip in the dormitory. Hush!' she whispered softly, 'talk not loud.'

Slowly their simple toilettes were made, the nun helping them. Then they were conducted to the chapel, where all the pupils, some fifty in number, were soon collected and '*Matins*' were celebrated. During the celebration Virginie's eyes wandered round the church in search of her aunt, but amid the throng of nuns, all dressed alike, it was impossible to distinguish anyone, and she was forced to content herself with examining the faces of the pupils who were around her. There were some who were quite grown up, and had already all the airs of '*Grandes Demoiselles*,' others, among whom Virginie found herself, were still rosy little girls, whose inattention had frequently to be reproved by a rather stern-looking nun in charge.

The service over, the little creatures crowded out of the church, and soon a Babel of confused little voices resounded through the corridor leading to the refectory. Virginie had hung back, half frightened to face this crowd of strangers, when a kind hand was placed on her head and a soft voice whispered, 'Good-day, my child; hast thou slept well?' It was the *Mère Ste. Ursule*.

It is not within the province of this narrative to follow Virginie during the eleven years she spent at Chartres. The wholesome monotony of convent life, where everything was conducted with undeviating punctuality, from the bell that rang for '*Matins*' in the morning to the bell that rang '*Complines*' at night, contributed to form and strengthen her constitution, while the peace and quiet of the place gave rest to a rather excitable nature. Virginie spent most of the time allowed for recreation pacing under the tall trees of that quiet convent garden with her aunt, or some other sister, or even by herself, either with a book, or in

silent reverie, preferring the quiet of the place to the noisy romping of her young companions. To her it was enough to watch the sticky buds bursting with the promise of spring, the little tender plants acquiring strength day by day till they put forth their glory of blossom, the leafy branches interlaced overhead as the south wind mysteriously moved them. If she saddened over the withering of her favourites in the autumn, she but sighed in Christian resignation, looking forward again to the glad return of spring with the confidence of youth. In truth all nature seemed a vast poem to the sentimental girl, a poem composed and ordained by the great Creator of all things, whose touch appeared alike in bud and seed, in the refreshing rains of spring, in the tempest and the sunshine. When she was in the chapel, the mighty notes of the organ, and the fresh voices of the singers raised in His praise, would bring tears of thankfulness to her eyes. The duties of convent life, the peace and restfulness of the place, greatly attracted her; she could fancy no pleasure more congenial than those afforded by the devotional exercises of religion, no happiness greater than that attained by prayer. When a novice was received into the convent it appeared beautiful to her so to renounce the world for the sake of religion. Her spirit was so wound up by the fervour of her belief that she would willingly have joined the community, but luckily for this narrative some good friends interposed between her and her inclinations. The confessor of the convent happened to be a very superior man. He directed her pious aspirations towards all the sublimest forms of religion, and took a delight in developing, by religion itself, the germs of virtue, without mixing it up with absurd mysticism. He encouraged her to attend the special periods consecrated to meditation, to which only those were admitted who appeared capable of joining in the pious exercises; but he never failed to point out that, though the sacrifice might be acceptable, true vocation could not be ascertained till more experience had been acquired.

‘Thou knowest not, my child, what thou would’st sacrifice,’ said the Abbé. ‘When thou hast acquired more experience of life, when thou hast tasted of its sweets, then thou canst decide. If then thou art of the same mind, it would be a joy to me to know thou wast willing to give up the passing for the eternal joy—but not now.’

Virginie was even more astonished that her aunt sided with the Abbé.

‘My child,’ said the Mère Ste. Ursule, ‘the Abbé Berulle is

a wise man, and has had great experience. Be guided entirely by him.'

The girl looked up to the pale face of the nun. Was it possible that one who seemed so entirely absorbed in her duties, one who had no vanities, no cares of the world, could have any doubts as to the completeness of the happiness to be attained by conventual life? She longed to ask her. She sometimes ventured on some tentative question. But her aunt quietly refused to discuss the matter.

When she was sixteen her beloved aunt, who was her mother's elder by some years, began to show signs of breaking health. She never uttered a word of complaint, and fulfilled her appointed tasks with her accustomed regularity. But she visibly grew thinner and weaker. In vain her sister nuns begged her to take rest and seek more skilled advice: the *Mère Ste. Ursule* always replied with a smile that there was nothing the matter with her, and that, if in good time it pleased the bountiful Creator to take her, it was not for her to resist His call. Soon she was too weak to leave her room, where *Virginie* was her constant nurse. One day she called her niece to her and took her hand.

'My daughter,' she said, 'I have watched thee these long years that thou hast been here. I have seen thee at one time drawn towards the sainted vocation I have followed myself, and I should have been false to my whole thoughts of religion had I said a word to prevent thee devoting thyself even as I have done. But I own it was with relief that I have witnessed thy recovery from thy fit of exaltation. Believe me, thou art a real woman, having too much of the healthy womanly feeling to be able to devote thyself to a religious life without constant effort. I speak not of myself. I am happy as I am. Yet thy presence here has been a constant snare to me. My affection for thee, even now, makes it hard for me to think of death, when death ought to lead me straight to my Heavenly Spouse, to whom I trust I have been constant all these long years. Do thou, my daughter, find some man worthy of thee. Do thou devote thyself to him and his children. In these duties thou wilt develop all that is good and tender in thy disposition, and thou wilt be making, what I feel in my inner nature to be, a truer and more acceptable sacrifice to the God we adore, than would be the undertaking of religious vows, whose fulfilment would be a constant effort to thy nature.' She tenderly kissed her niece as she finished.

Some few days after, as the morning sun was beginning to

shine through her little window, she called faintly to Virginie, who was watching by her bedside.

'The light seems to be fading, my dear. Raise me up that I may see the last of it,' she whispered.

Virginie, weeping, passed her arms round the thin form.

'My child,' said the dying woman, 'thy arms lift me upwards towards Heaven. They no longer seem to drag me down. Oh, my Saviour, I come to Thee! Glory to the Highest! Virginie, let me feel thy lips once more. I come, I come!'

And with her niece's lips to her forehead, the sweet spirit fled upwards to its Maker.

CHAPTER VI.

GAINING EXPERIENCE.

A YEAR had passed since she had made up her mind to embrace a life of religion. Since that time Virginie had changed, though she did not know it. She still declared to herself that she was determined to enter the convent, but, having also made up her mind to defer the accomplishment of her intention to an indefinite period, she had insensibly turned her attention towards life itself. In reality it was the romance of taking the veil that had so appealed to her imagination the year before. Religious by nature, Virginie's temperament was, as her aunt had discerned, essentially womanly. She had all the perceptive qualities possessed as a kind of instinct by many women. As she thought over the words of her dying aunt, after the agony of the parting had been softened by time, she could not help perceiving that even this sainted woman had found the consolations of religion by themselves insufficient. What else did she mean by saying that the affection she bore her niece was a snare? As the girl took her quiet walks in the convent garden, she let her thoughts wander beyond the limits of the convent walls. Life, rendered more attractive from her utter ignorance of the world, seemed very beautiful to her. When the trees, the flowers, the skies were so wondrous, so harmonious, what must life be? What the communing of congenial spirits? what the noble aspirations, thoughts, and impulses of man, made, as she had been taught to believe, in the image of his Creator? Of love she hardly dared dream. It was a subject forbidden in those walls, except in the

divine shape of which she had experienced the futility. She had never even read of evil, save in the very naked and repulsive form the too frequent vices of mankind were depicted in the books allowed within those sacred limits. She had eagerly devoured the books composing the library of her aunt, but they were generally rhapsodical poems like those of the *Père Du Cerceau*, or works of history and biography, tending to exalt the sentiments of the young and inspire them with emulation for the heroic and the sublime. Of life and its troubles, of human nature and its infinite vanities, of manners with their rules, meannesses, and trivialities, these books said nothing. The only varieties of dispositions Virginie had encountered were to be found among her fellow pupils, and here, she owned with a sigh, she found already much that differed from what she had studied in her aunt's little library.

There were many of these girls who, with the enthusiasm natural to youth, offered her their life-long affection. Some, absurdly sentimental, poured into her astonished ears gushing sentiment that even she, inexperienced as she was, could not but perceive to be false and hollow. All the *demoiselles* of the higher and older class in the school, to which she by age and talents now belonged, sighed for their liberty. They murmured against the rules of the place that forbade the indulgence of unnecessary finery in dress. They told extraordinary and sentimental tales of Hector and Achille, gay and brilliant youths, generally cousins, or at least friends of their brothers, who were desperately in love and longed for the moment of their release from school discipline to declare their passion in due form. Alas! what had the daughter of an innkeeper to do with such a world? She had no experience of gallant youths. She had no holidays spent at home in the society of a fond mother and gallant young brothers. But the world of these young things had not the true ring, their aspirations and hopes were not attractive to Virginie, and she turned with disappointment from their proffered friendship.

The pupils at the convent were divided into two cliques—the *noblesse* and the *bourgeois*. It must be owned that the first gave themselves great airs. They belonged, it is true, to the poorer nobility, for those who could afford it either had their children educated at home, or else sent them to those convents where they would find nothing but daughters of noble houses. Though poor, the *demoiselles* of the Convent of the Visitation had

all the pride of their class. They looked down with disdain on the less nobly born maidens with whom they had to associate. These latter were often able to revenge this disdain by absurd displays of superior wealth. If Mademoiselle de la Ville Evêque despised Mademoiselle Gavard, the latter took care to point out that the noble young lady had but two poor gowns, and that her underlinen was disgraceful; while she, Gavard, had as many frocks as she chose to ask for. So inside this seemingly peaceful abode there was anything but peace, and the sisters had, at times, much trouble in making their pupils preserve even an outward semblance of concord.

Virginie naturally belonged to the plebeian class; but, by depriving himself entirely of her society, Jacques had made his girl in some sort the child of the convent. So it came about that, in spite of her fatal name of Le Blanc, she found herself courted by both the *noblesse*, who forgave her origin, and by the *bourgeoisie*, who claimed her as one of themselves. Her beauty and the quiet charm of her nature made her acceptable to all. She was both a bone of contention and a peacemaker. Yet she had to exercise all her native tact to preserve her neutrality, nor would she have been able to do so but for the admiration her talents excited.

Mademoiselle Le Blanc had a beautiful contralto voice, and a true vocation for music, which happened to be the art most cultivated at the convent. She was by nature studious, and she laboured hard to render herself as perfect as possible, both as a singer and instrumentalist. And she grew to love music, the most emotional of the arts, with her whole soul. The convent was proud of its pupil, whose proficiency did it credit. Soon the chapel became crowded by the fashion of Chartres, and the voice of the unknown pupil was talked of throughout the city. So it was that Virginie herself was surrounded with admirers, she grew insensibly accustomed to the incense of flattery, both from the sisters and from the *pensionnaires* of the convent, and she was considered a lucky girl who gained the friendship of 'la belle Le Blanc.'

From her earliest years Virginie had witnessed to the war of classes. She saw how highly even the nuns esteemed rank; how the daughter of a noble father received attention and consideration denied to her more basely born comrade. Indeed, the convent was but a reproduction of French society. The marked line between class and class was but more strongly perceived

because the society was so small. To this sensitive girl the experience she gained was painful. Though the young ladies of family offered their friendship, they took care to impress on her, that there *was* a difference between the daughter of a noble and the child of an innkeeper, and if they chose to waive their rights, it was condescension on their part for which she ought to be grateful. Yet she felt herself infinitely their superior in talent and accomplishments, while, without vanity, she could not but perceive that nature had gifted her with looks which they did not possess.

Among the pupils at the convent was a young lady whose mother lived at Chartres, and who came to receive her education as a day boarder. Célimène de la Rosière was a pretty sunny girl of thirteen. Not possessed of any great talent, she had at least a power for appreciating talent in others, and consequently her admiration for Virginie, who was her senior by four years, was boundless. What man or woman is proof against the flattery of true admiration? The admiration of Célimène was so artless and sincere that it would have been a brutal act indeed to reject it. As well might the mighty sun burn up and wither the poor little flower that follows with pretty face its glorious course. There was something so touching and winning about the girl that Virginie readily took her to her heart, and she nestled there as a baby nestles against its mother's breast.

Célimène's mother was of the *noblesse*, though, being a widow, and not in affluent circumstances, she was forced to give her daughter an education within her means. Be sure, in the confidences this young lady was only too fond of making, she told her mother of her new friendship. She talked so frequently of Mademoiselle Le Blanc that Madame de la Rosière became anxious to see one who exercised so great an influence on her daughter. It so happened that the priest who held the office of confessor to the convent filled the same pious duties in the De la Rosière family. From him Madame de la Rosière made inquiries as to the moral qualities of her daughter's friend, and the good Abbé gave such a favourable account of Virginie's character, that Célimène was empowered to bring her friend to her mother's house.

The De la Rosières inhabited an old house in the immediate neighbourhood of Chartres. The mother, who was in delicate health, seldom quitted her room; the two girls, however, not only

ran wild in the large old-fashioned gardens, but, duly guarded, rode and walked in the surrounding country. Many excursions they made in the early summer along the banks of the Eure, and great was the delight of Célimène in showing her friend, who knew nothing of the country beyond the walls of the convent, the beauties of one of the prettiest parts of France. Virginie herself, it must be owned, greatly enjoyed her liberty.

One summer's afternoon they were sitting in the shade of a large cedar in their garden. They had persuaded Madame de la Rosière to join them, the day being so fine and warm. The good lady sat in a large chair, carefully propped up with pillows, and covered with a shawl notwithstanding the warmth of the weather. The two girls sat on the ground and Virginie was singing the '*Plaisir d'Amour*' of the Abbé Martini. Célimène, sitting close to her, was gazing at her in rapt admiration, trifling the while with the chestnut ringlets which after the fashion of the day hung down one side of her friend's neck. Virginie was simply dressed in grey, with a snowy white fichu negligently arranged round her shoulders. In one hand she held her large hat, which she had taken off while singing. With the other she absently plucked the blades of grass growing near her. It was strange so sentimental a song should have found its way into the convent. But in music, as in war, you are obliged to do what they do in music, and most of the songs of that age, and indeed of every age, are written to the old subject. Perhaps they explained this song away as being a man's song. It suited Virginie's voice admirably, and the sentiment of it had such a powerful effect on her that, as she sang

L'eau coule encore, elle m'a quitté pourtant,

she threw the handful of grass she had gathered from her with a pretty gesture. Then came the refrain,

*Plaisirs d'amour ne durent qu'un moment,
Chagrins d'amour durent toute la vie,*

which she sang with her eyes full of tears, feeling the whole force of the pathos—she who knew nothing of love. When the song was over there was a pause of silence. 'Child,' said Madame de la Rosière with a sigh, 'you have a wonderful voice. Come here and let me embrace you.'

Virginie rose, her eyes still full of tears, when she stood transfixed with astonishment, for there, within a few feet behind

the invalid's chair, stood a handsome young man, who had approached unseen during the singing.

'Well,' cried the invalid, who did not see him.

Virginie stood undecided. 'Célimène,' she said and stopped. At that moment Célimène turned, leaped up and clapped her hands. 'Étienne,' she cried, 'you here!'

'Pardon me, my dear,' said the stranger in a deep musical voice. 'I was very unwilling to disturb you while Mademoiselle was singing. Good-day, aunt. I hope you are a little better.'

'Not much,' said Madame de la Rosière in the weary voice all invalids too readily assume, giving her thin hand to the young man, who kissed it fondly.

'And you, Célimène,' he asked, as he took both her hands, and tried to kiss her. The girl laughed and struggled, and when she freed herself she was red and rumped.

'You are too bad, Étienne,' she said, with offended dignity; 'I am no longer a child.'

'But you are still my pretty little cousin and ward,' laughed the young man.

'And what brings my aged guardian from his savage haunts?' asked Célimène saucily.

'I had business in Chartres, and so thought I would look in to see whether my cousin had grown.'

'And you brought your country manners with you,' cried Célimène.

'Perhaps, my pale city lily.'

Now Célimène was fresh and rosy-looking, and would no doubt have replied with offended dignity, but Madame de la Rosière, like most invalids, was inclined to be querulous.

'Célimène,' she said, 'do be reasonable for a little time, and do you, Étienne, come and sit near me, and tell me the news.'

The stranger looked at Virginie; no one had presented him to her. Virginie herself was watching the scene, or rather the new arrival, with interest. This was the first young man she had ever met. He looked so handsome in his blue riding coat and tri-cornered hat, so straight and strong, so different from the priests and professors who were the only men allowed to enter the convent! She wondered who the beauteous prince could be, who seemed to drop down from the clouds. Could it be that like a St. Cecilia she had drawn him by her song from another world? When she first caught sight of him he had looked so grave and sad. Was it

possible some 'Silvie' had jilted this man? So stood she, wrapped in thought.

But Célimène saw the awkwardness of her situation. 'Petite Mère,' she said, 'you have not presented Virginie to cousin Étienne.'

'Pardon me,' said her mother; 'Mlle. Le Blanc, this is my nephew, the Comte de la Beauce.'

The stranger bowed, and Virginie dropped the deep reverence of the day.

(To be continued.)

The History of an Infancy.

I.

'WE take a great interest,' wrote an American friend of mine, 'in all the English authors whose works we like.' This was a good many years ago. She added much which, however flattering to vanity, was not to be accepted by good sense.

She wished me to write for her an account of 'my life and works and views,' and said she would take the trouble to put facts together and make an agreeable little memoir, 'which should not contain anything but what would please me.'

I begged to be excused, and explained that I could not make myself ridiculous even to please the kindest readers, that nothing would be more contrary to my taste than to write of myself, and that in fact there was nothing which was of any particular interest. Having added that in my own country I held no such place in literature as would make my personal history of any consequence, I hoped the matter would drop. She replied that the early struggles of authors, especially of poets, and more than all of female poets, were always of consequence and of interest too. But then there had been no 'early struggles' of any sort or kind, which must have been felt by my friend to be a great pity, for on being assured of this fact she ceased to propose herself as an assistant biographer.

Some time after, another literary acquaintance, who was preparing memoirs of various living authors, proposed to include one of me, and when I objected he said that it had to be done and would be done, and it was surely best for the said 'living authors' to have a hand each in his or her own memoir.

This was by way of warning, and I promised to consider the matter; but perhaps I was too long considering, for, to cut this egotistical relation short, I was shown in a very little while a pretty, kindly, and much more than appreciative notice of a

person called by my name. There was hardly a single item in it that was really true, even to the description of my birthplace, which of all places in England is generally supposed to be by Americans best known.

It was said to be stationed on the sea beach and flanked by two lighthouses, 'between which the lonely child might have been seen to wander for hours together, nursing her poetic dreams, dragging the long banners of the dulse after her, and listening to the language of the waves' (I quote from memory).

This memoir caused keen joy to my brothers and sisters and some few intimate friends.

My biography, such as it was, had now been written.

At first it appeared necessary to answer it, disclaim the poetic dreams, also the grotesque neglect implied in such lonely wandering, to put the dates right, describe the place correctly, and so on, but reflection made me perceive that this would be in point of fact to write a biography. Some few friends who knew how incorrect it all was wrote and pressed this on me as a duty; but I took time to consider, did nothing, and hoped that in time the memoir would be forgotten, as in fact it was, and I was no longer laughed at about it.

Here I should like to make an independent remark. It is that the FAMILY standing around close at hand, the READERS of a young author often appear to be remote. To a poetic nature expression is a necessity; but once expressed that impassioned feeling or thought which had been importunate may often go into the background. That other persons should take it in was no part of the bargain. It is a surprise if they do, and a pleasure, unless they insist on admiring the worst poems, as is frequently the case, and then they make the writer of them feel small.

He or she could not possibly help writing them, that is agreed; but if you, my reader, had been in youth a member of a cultivated, witty, and affectionate family, were supposed to be sensible, and had always been expected to behave on the whole like other people, and if you flattered yourself that you did so behave, and if you delighted in the companionship of your family far more than in any other, you would not have been at all pleased if people had suddenly exclaimed that you were a poet, because that is a circumstance which more than most others sets one apart.

It is true that I wrote verses; *poetry* we fearlessly called it. Some of it was published from time to time: that we did not

mind, it came so naturally ; but, if I may say so without ridicule, to write poetry, and to be a poet, an out and out poet of the high old-fashioned sort, are two different—perfectly different—things.

A poet was a creature who emphatically was not expected to be like other people ; he dwelt apart in the society as was frequently said, of the muses. It was their common habit to burn the midnight oil. There was no such thing as being a poet in moderation. These habits, it appears, were not thought insufferable in them, any more than it was thought so in Thomson to eat peaches off the wall without first gathering them.

Besides, they all knew that they were poets, and so did everybody about them. Mrs. Browning's father, she says, thought of her even in childhood as 'the poet at his knee.' 'And why,' says Cowper, addressing the sun,

Apollo, hast thou stolen away
A poet's drop of ink ?

Young, writing to his friend Yorke, calls himself 'a much-indebted muse.'

But this is a digression.

It has been my fate many times since that now distant time to be asked for the 'particulars of my life ;' the same I know to be the case with all my fellow authors. In fact, from my point of view this is one of the few drawbacks to the delightful craft of authorship.

The world is said more and more to wish for particulars concerning those who have desired to amuse or instruct it, and that is an awkward thing for such as, though they may have nothing to conceal, have also nothing of the least interest to relate.

'Memoirs are written now of most living authors,' observed another acquaintance of mine to whom I said something of this kind ; 'in fact, of everybody *who is anybody*. Do you mean to say that you could not do one of yourself, and make it amusing too ?'

'Oh, yes,' I replied, 'it would be amusing, particularly to my enemies ; my friends might not like it so well, for of course it would have to begin at the beginning, and if I wrote the history of my infancy as I remember it, who would believe me ?'

'I would,' was the prompt answer ; 'I promise you that.'

'What ! if it began when I was sixteen months old ?'

My friend laughed and said, 'Of course not,' as if my last remark had been meant for a joke, and finding that this was not the case began to argue. If one does not wish to do any par-

particular thing one should not argue the point. I knew this, and yet was beguiled into argument and then into assertion, and just as my friend began to think the subject had better be dropped (for she is a kind and charitable person, and did not wish to listen while I made myself ridiculous), it became clear to me, almost as a surprise, that I never had read the history of an infant written by itself in after-life—that is, not such a history as I could write from memory.

I considered, when left alone, that I had never been willing to talk of these first years, and I may say months, from this very feeling that, if not thought to be romancing, I should be found tedious, for I should not describe experiences which, even if remembered, are dwelt upon by the majority.

But I may be wrong, for we can but remember for ourselves, and I know from experience that there are months and years in after-life that are almost utterly forgotten because there was little in them that was delightful, disastrous, new, or astonishing, which I cared to recall. May it not be, then, that people forget because they do not care to remember their very early days, and if they made attempts to recall them would not certain visions which have been passed into the background for many years rise again with a distinctness which makes it impossible to mistake them for inventions, and also makes it certain that the records of this life are not annihilated, but only covered and quenched?

‘When I became a man,’ I have had quoted against me, ‘I put away childish things;’ but the history of childhood, which means the history of humanity at its most wonderful period—that when it is most liable to injury and most at the mercy of others—is not by any means in reality one of those childish things.

What differences of opinion there are about almost all that concerns it—whether it shall be warmly clad, tenderly cherished, or hardened, as it is called, by lighter clothing, exposure to weather, and plain food; whether it shall be brought on and sedulously taught to the utmost limit of its powers, disciplined, exhorted, and stimulated, or whether it shall be subjected to a slight amount of what has been called ‘wholesome neglect’ and running wild; even such important matters as these are not decided yet.

Thinking thus, I considered that the true history of an infant was still to be written, and that I might write it without real egotism, for it was scarcely of myself.

That small, surprised, and tender creature had hardly any-

thing in common with the very inferior mortal whom it has now become.

But I decided first to ask certain friends for their own earliest recollections, and if these differed wholly from my own to keep these latter to myself, for abnormal things cannot be of any real use or interest.

I found that they did not differ always, but that there was in fact more variety than I could have supposed possible, so I shall venture to record something of what I remember concerning the scenes and impressions and beliefs of infancy, giving first what others have told me from the earliest recorded vision to the time when responsible and conscious life begins—that is, at about four or five years old.

The history shall be true so far as I can make it so. The after-events of life have not distinguished it from many thousands of others, but everything was distinguished and wonderful when first it appeared: so doubtless did the lovely dawn appear to each of you.

Infancy, as I remember it, is conscious of no before and after; it has no seasons; these are too long for it to reach back to. It has no dates—no dates of its own—and it belongs to no date in our century or era. What is true of an infancy now was always true. A hundred years ago, a thousand years ago, its sensations, discoveries, and observations would be just the same. It is never too hot, nor too cold, is never hungry or thirsty, probably because such care is taken of it, every want supplied before it begins to give pain.

Early infancy asks no questions, not having language. It does not in the least understand what those immensely large tall people say who are talking on every side. It does not, for a time, attempt to imitate them.

We can none of us tell what we felt or expected so soon as that, and when we say we remember such and such things we always mean—at least all do whom I have asked—that when we recall our first experience it invariably rises to us as a vision or scene, is always exactly the same, and, so far as we know, always has been.

It is not the case that those whose memory has preserved most were specially precocious, or even clever, but merely that what they did and saw they have not utterly forgotten.

However, the first examples I have to adduce show decided precocity. Some time ago, being in the company of a woman of

genius who has been, perhaps, the most widely read of living English authors, I asked her to tell me her first recollection. She said she believed it was seeing in a nursery a baby who was wrapped in a blue shawl. She thought she was about one year and ten months old. Her parents went generally in the autumn to visit the friends to whom this baby belonged. She remarked that the first recollection usually was of something new or strange to the child, and, as she was at that time an only child, this baby was probably the first she had ever seen, or at least come into contact with and noticed.

Then she said it was quite possible that she might have been two years old. I think even this revised date was considered wonderful by those present.

I always value most the first spontaneous opinion given as to the age of the infant remembering, for the narrator, reflecting that it is not common, or rather not commonly, supposed that memory can go so far back, will often withdraw and say, 'Though I appear to myself to have been so young, no doubt I was in reality much older; so let me, if not accurate, be at least on the right side.'

I found nothing incredible, and in fact nothing very extraordinary, in the 'one year and ten months,' and wanting very much some more such recollections from her, I said I had one at least which reached back to one year and five months; but a chorus of good-natured laughter followed this declaration; nobody present appeared to think this could be anything more than an absurd mistake.

About three years old they one and all gave as the time when they began to recollect things, and they said nothing distinctive even of that late date. They knew apparently nothing of the vision-like clearness and defined certainty, which belong to a sight beheld ere there is intelligence to perceive what it is or what it means.

Here, then, was a good deal of precocity, and the other powers (unusual in themselves) all came into play together.

Life began with the surprising sight of a small live creature, afterwards known to be a baby; but between two and three years old, though a great deal of knowledge was acquired, no special scene was recorded by the mind's eye, as if it was a vision from some other world.

I asked another friend for her earliest recollection. She said, 'I can recall nothing whatever before I was fully three years old. I

had a severe attack of scarlet fever, and remember as if it was the beginning of life the getting better; but,' she added, 'one of my sisters-in-law remembers certain things which took place when she was really infantine, and I will write and ask her about them.'

Accordingly I heard shortly from my friend.

'This is the message my sister-in-law sends:—

"Tell Miss Ingelow this from me: When I was eighteen months old my mother left home for Hastings. I perfectly remember her coming into the nursery with my sister to bid good-bye to Clifford, Charlie, and me. The whole aspect of the room and the arrangement of the furniture is like a mental photograph. I see us playing on the floor, and see the door open and a tall figure in black come in, followed by a little girl also in black, and this is the only recollection, I grieve to say, of any kind that I have of my mother. Years after I told old nurse about this, and asked her if I remembered aright. She said, 'Perfectly. The mistress was wearing mourning then for old Mrs. C.'

"The next thing I recollect is her death three months after, bringing me to twenty-one months of age, and Clifford shutting himself alone (it happened to be the third anniversary of his birthday) into a room and refusing to be comforted. From that time my life has gone on quite connectedly from year to year.

"When I was three years old Mrs. M. came to stay with us. I remember a dress she wore, and she has told me since that she had such a dress. I also remember our servants, our dogs, and even certain puddings that we had at this period."

Here the first recollection, the vision of the mother coming in, is very unusual, but the second, of the little brother's grief, is much more remarkable, because this mere baby of twenty-one months appears to have been in some sort aware of something to be sorry about.

A very charming writer was asked for her earliest recollection, to be sent to me. The reply was, 'L. says the first thing she recollects is chasing a boy cousin, who was a year older than she, round and round the nursery, and thrashing him with a whip, and she was punished for this by being made to sit in a chair.' She was then two years and a half old, quite an aged person compared with the last instance; but the letter goes on, 'She remembers also, when she was two years and four months old, reading to her mother, who was in bed, several verses from the fifteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel. She does not believe she really read them, but presumes that she had learned them. But she remembers

the book lying open and pointing to the words as she said them.'

That is to say, she remembers as a vision the little scene—the young mother breakfasting in bed, and the pointing to the words while she as a tiny child leaned over them—but she is not sure of the explanation, cannot reason upon the facts, and only knows what she saw. I think she did *read* the words, but had been taught to spell them over, and had learned them by heart, as one almost always does in the process.

But I am not so much concerned here with what may have been done as with the recollection of having done it, and in process of finding early recollections I have observed that illness it may be said always obliterates them. There have been children who after severe illness, even at four years old, have forgotten how to talk, and many who have forgotten everything that took place up to a still later time if they have had fever.

There is also such a thing in early childhood as dormant memory. A curious instance of this took place in our family. My mother went on a visit to my grandfather, who lived in London. She took with her a little brother of mine who was eleven months old, and his nurse, who waited on her as her maid.

One day this nurse brought the baby boy into my mother's room and put him on the floor, which was carpeted all over. There he crept about and amused himself according to his lights. When my mother was dressed, a certain ring that she generally wore was not to be found. Great search was made, but it was never produced; and the visit over, they all went away, and it was almost forgotten.

Exactly a year after they again went to visit the grandfather. This baby was now a year and eleven months old. The same nurse again took him into the same room, and my mother saw him, after looking about him, deliberately walk up to a certain corner, turn a bit of the carpet back, and produce the ring. He never gave any account of the matter, nor did he, so far as I know, remember it afterwards. It seems most likely that he found the ring on the floor, and hid it, as in a safe place, under a corner of the Brussels carpet where it was not nailed. He probably forgot all about it till he saw the place again; and he was far too infantine at the time when it was missed to understand what the talk that went on was about, or to know what the search, which perhaps he did not notice, was for.

This same child was not at all precocious in his powers of learning lessons, and showed no remarkable qualities, but the next example I want to give is of decided precocity as well as of that power to hold the remembrance of all the past life in view which is very unusual. There is a fervour of nature, too, which wears well and never seems to exhaust itself.

This friend, who is still young, thought the first thing she could see when she looked back was a vision of a plant twining up a string. She stood before it and liked the bright colours. She did not think she could talk then; therefore she could not have been much more than a year old, because it was a long time before she could read. She could read when she was two years old, and in fact when she was two years old she went to school. This must have been a kind of *Kindergarten*. She was the child of very young parents, and it seems that they did not consider it unwise to send her to learn lessons while still an infant. They were very proud of her. The school was close at hand, and she remembered that her mother would sometimes trust her to go to it alone, watching her as she went from her own steps. She thinks she taught herself to read; certainly she could have had but little aid, and it really seems that her parents were not fully aware how different she was from other children. Here the date is fixed by the fact of going to school. Another friend expresses our difficulty thus: 'I have not been successful in my efforts relating to the subject of early *authenticated* memory. Most people say, "I remember this or that. I must have been very young;" but of course they know no dates themselves, others cannot call to mind the same event, and there is nothing to fix a date.'

She then quotes from the letter of one of her nieces, whom I had heard of as having early recollections. 'Mother can remember a golden lamb that she saw in old Mrs. Applebee's garden. She was then aged one year and five months. She thought it so lovely that she never forgot it, though she did not see it again. She can fix the date, as she was sent to Mrs. Applebee's when Aunt Lizzie' (her sister) 'was born. She afterwards told grandmother about the lamb when she was older, and heard that it came from a hosier's shop.'

'My earliest recollections are, when I was two years and one month old, going out to tea and having tea out of little tea-things on Alice's birthday, which was in July, mine being in June; one of the little children wanted to poke out my eyes. I remember

how frightened I was, and that Mrs. B. carried me about, as they were afraid that she would hurt me.'

Both these recollections are valuable, being authenticated by the dates of the birthdays. Perhaps the beautiful little vision of a golden lamb is the most so. It does not appear that the baby thought this lamb was alive, or rather that she knew what life was, but, as I know by experience, the image of a thing may easily stand then for the thing itself.

It is often said that it is the unusual event which makes the mark on the memory; so, no doubt, it is when one is old and intelligent enough to consider a certain event unusual, but before that one event is just as wonderful as another. To see a butterfly uncloset its wings and float away is, when first beheld, a thing to 'make a mark;' but I must have seen this and forgotten it, when some horse-beans or lupins—I know not which, but I think the latter—came up in the garden, and I was infantine enough to think they were alive, a sort of butterfly, and when some feathery little leaves came up between the first two I thought they grew out of the butterfly's back.

Two relatives and a friend proffered their infantile history to me yesterday. The ages given were five years old, four years, and three years. The witness who said he did not believe he remembered anything before he was five years old said his earliest recollection was of being out with his mother and gathering violets. He felt sure that he was about five years old, but he could not tell on being questioned whether he could talk at the time or what sort of a frock he had on. That he was delighted he knew, and also that it was his mother that he was with, but nothing more. It seems highly probable that, there being nothing here to fix a date, the child was much younger than the man allowed.

The next was four years old when her history began. She knew it because she was at a particular country house to which her parents went at that time. She was expressly forbidden to pick the flowers in the garden, but she saw some crocuses which had been thrown on a rubbish mound outside the garden; she climbed over a little stile, gathered them, and had got over again when her nurse met her and was so very angry, and she was so much frightened, that she never forgot it.

The third (one of my sisters) said the first thing she remembered was, when she was three years old, being first taken to church.

Our parents then attended the village church of Skirbeck,

where they had two long pews in the chancel, one behind the other. In the back one our aunt sat with the two elder children, and in the front our parents with three little ones artfully divided from one another. They were always good, so far as I know, and generally happy. It was supposed to be a great honour to go to church, which they began to do on Sunday morning at three years old. To make a long story short, there was in the wooden back of the front pew a little oval hole where a knot or branch had come out of the wood. The very smallest churchgoer, while my mother knelt, sometimes sat on a hassock beside her, 'and I believe,' said my sister, 'my earliest recollection is that when I was at church this first time the big ones poked some sugar-plums through the hole to me.'

JEAN INGELOW.

(To be concluded.)

The Idol.

I HAVE known it young, I have known it old,
 I have found an idol of purest gold,
 And yet there has always come a day
 When I saw that the idol's feet were clay.

Of purest gold was fashioned the rest,
 In that one idol I loved the best;
 And ah! that there should be this to say,
 That the feet were clay, the feet were clay.

You may watch till watching outdoes your might,
 Never the gold is a whit less bright;
 The idol never shall lose a ray,
 But the feet are clay, the feet are clay.

I had counted, half knowing, the cost before;
 'If only the idol is mine to adore,'
 I cried, 'it is naught if the trumpets bray
 That the feet are clay, the feet are clay.'

'If the thunder's voice should bear it afar
 That the idol is what all idols are;
 If I take them for gold what matters it, pray,
 If the feet of the idol are only clay?'

And yet the news one day must come
 With tune of harp or rattle of drum,
 In strife of squadrons, on moonlit bay,
 That the feet after all are nothing but clay.

Let the people tell it, and let them repeat
What tales they like of the idol's feet,
To this assurance my life I'll hold,
That the idol's heart is of purest gold.

A worshipper must be brave and wise—
The gold is a dauntless gazer's prize ;
'Tis the blind who chant in the same dull way
That the feet of our idols are always clay.

Let the darkened eyes of the blind awake,
Let them see the truth for the truth's own sake,
They shall know 'tis a foolish tale is told,
That even the feet are of aught but gold.

Let the blind but open their eyes to the light,
Nay, let them see truth in their visions of night,
So shall they an idol fashioned behold,
Through and through of the purest gold.

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

The Lady Penelope.

IN going out of Casterbridge by the low-lying road which eventually conducts to the town of Ivell, you see on the right hand an ivied manor-house, flanked by battlemented towers, and more than usually distinguished by the size of its many-mullioned windows. Though still of good capacity, the building is much reduced from its original grand proportions; it has, moreover, been shorn of the fair estate which once appertained to it, with the exception of a few acres of park land immediately around the mansion. This was formerly the seat of the ancient and knightly family of the Drenguards, or Drenchards, now extinct in the male line, whose name, according to the local chronicles, was interpreted to mean *Strenuus Miles, vel Potator*, though certain members of the family were averse to the latter signification, and a duel was fought by one of them on that account, as is well known. But this is beside the story.

In the early part of the reign of the first King James, there was visiting near this place of the Drenguards a lady of noble family and extraordinary beauty. She possessed no great wealth, it was said, but was sufficiently endowed. Her beauty was so perfect, and her manner so entrancing, that suitors seemed to spring out of the ground wherever she went, a sufficient cause of anxiety to the countess her mother, her only living parent. Of these there were three in particular, whom neither her mother's complaints of prematurity, nor the ready raillery of the maiden herself, could effectually put off. The said gallants were a certain Sir John Gale, a Sir William Hervy, and the well-known Sir George Drenguard, one of the Drenguard family before mentioned. They had, curiously enough, all been equally honoured with the distinction of knighthood, and their schemes for seeing her were manifold, each fearing that one of the others would steal a march over himself. Not content with calling on every imaginable excuse at the house of the relative with whom she sojourned, they intercepted her in rides and walks; and if any one of them chanced to surprise another

in the act of paying her marked attentions, the encounter often ended in an altercation of great violence. So heated and impassioned, indeed, would they become, that the lady hardly felt herself safe in their company at such times, notwithstanding that she was a brave and buxom damsel, not easily put out, and with a daring spirit of humour in her composition, if not of coquetry.

On one of these occasions which had place in her relative's grounds, and was unusually bitter, threatening to result in a duel, she found it necessary to assert herself. Turning haughtily upon the pair of disputants, she declared that whichever should be the first to break the peace between them, whatever the provocation, that man should never be admitted to her presence again: and thus would she effectually stultify the aggressor by making the promotion of a quarrel a distinct bar to its object.

While the two knights were wearing rather a crestfallen appearance at her reprimand, the third, never far off, came upon the scene, and she repeated her caveat to him also. Seeing, then, how great was the concern of all at her peremptory mood, the lady's manner softened, and she said with a roguish smile:

'Have patience, have patience, you foolish men! Only bide your time quietly; and, in faith, I will marry you all in turn!'

They laughed heartily at this sally, all three together, as though they were the best of friends, at which she blushed, and showed some embarrassment—not having realised that her arch jest would have sounded so strange when uttered. The meeting which resulted thus, however, had its good effect in checking the bitterness of their rivalry; and they repeated her speech to their relatives and acquaintance with a hilarious frequency and publicity that the lady little divined, or she might have blushed and felt more embarrassment still.

In the course of time the position resolved itself, and the beauteous Lady Penelope (as she was called) made up her mind; her choice being the eldest of the three knights, Sir George Drengard, owner of the mansion aforesaid, which thereupon became her home; and her husband being a pleasant man, and his family, though not so noble, of as good repute as her own, all things seemed to show that she had reckoned wisely in honouring him with her preference.

But what may lie behind the still and silent veil of the future none can foretell. In the course of a few months the husband of her choice died of his convivialities (as if, indeed, to bear out his name), and the Lady Penelope was left alone as mistress

of his house. By this time she had apparently quite forgotten her careless declaration to her lovers collectively; but the lovers themselves had not forgotten it; and, as she would now be free to take a second one of them, Sir John Gale appeared at her door as early in her widowhood as it was proper and seemly to do so.

She gave him little encouragement; for of the two remaining her best beloved was Sir William, of whom, if the truth must be told, she had often thought during her short married life. But he had not yet reappeared. Her heart began to be so much with him now, that she contrived to convey to him by indirect hints through his friends that she would not be displeased by a renewal of his former attentions. Sir William, however, misapprehended her gentle signalling, and from excellent, though mistaken, motives of delicacy, delayed to intrude himself upon her for a long time. Meanwhile Sir John, now created a baronet, was unremitting, and she began to grow somewhat piqued at the backwardness of him she secretly desired to be forward.

‘Never mind,’ her friends said jestingly to her (knowing of her humorous remark, as everybody did, that she would marry them all three if they would have patience). ‘Never mind; why hesitate upon the order of them? Take ’em as they come.’

This vexed her still more, and regretting deeply, as she had often done, that such a careless speech should ever have passed her lips, she fairly broke down under Sir John’s importunity, and accepted his hand. They were married on a fine spring morning, about the very time at which the unfortunate Sir William discovered her preference for him, and was beginning to hasten home from a foreign court to declare his unaltered devotion to her. On his arrival in England he learnt the sad truth.

If Sir William suffered at her precipitancy under what she had deemed his neglect, the Lady Penelope herself suffered more. She had not long been the wife of Sir John Gale before he showed a disposition to retaliate upon her for the trouble and delay she had put him to in winning her. With increasing frequency he would tell her that, as far as he could perceive, she was an article not worth such labour as he had bestowed in obtaining it, and such snubbings as he had taken from his rivals on the same account. These and other cruel things he repeated till he made the lady weep sorely, and well-nigh broke her spirit, though she had formerly been such a mettlesome dame. By degrees it became perceptible to all her friends that her life was a very unhappy one; and the fate of the fair woman seemed yet

the harder in that it was her own stately mansion, left to her sole use by her first husband, which her second had entered into and was enjoying, his being but a mean and meagre thing.

But such is the flippancy of friends, that when she met them, and secretly confided her grief to their ears, they would say cheerily, 'Never mind; there's a third to come yet!'—at which maladroit remark she would show much indignation, and tell them they should know better than to trifle on such a solemn theme. Yet that the poor lady would have been only too happy to be the wife of the third instead of Sir John whom she had taken, was painfully obvious, and much she was blamed for her foolish choice by some people. Sir William, however, had returned to foreign cities on learning the news of her marriage, and had never been heard of since.

Two or three years of suffering were passed by Lady Penelope as the despised and chidden wife of this man Sir John, amid regrets that she had so greatly mistaken him, and sighs for one whom she thought never to see again; till it chanced that her husband fell sick of some slight ailment. One day after this, when she was sitting in his room, looking from the window upon the expanse in front, she beheld approaching the house on foot a form she seemed to know well. Lady Penelope withdrew silently from the sick room, and descended to the hall, whence, through the doorway, she saw entering between the two round towers, which at that time flanked the gateway, Sir William Hery as she had surmised, but looking thin and travel-worn. She advanced into the courtyard to meet him.

'I was passing through Casterbridge,' he said with faltering deference, 'and I walked out to ask after your ladyship's health. I felt that I could do no less; and, of course, to pay my respects to your good husband, my heretofore acquaintance. . . . But O, Penelope, th'st look sick and sorry!'

'I am heart-sick, that's all,' said she.

They could see in each other an emotion which neither wished to express, and they stood thus a long time with tears in their eyes.

'He does not treat 'ee well, I hear,' said Sir William in a low voice. 'May God in Heaven forgive him; but it is asking a great deal!'

'Hush, hush!' said she hastily.

'Nay, but I will speak what I may honestly say,' he answered. 'I am not under your roof, and my tongue is free. Why didst not

wait for me, Penelope, or send to me a more overt letter? I would have travelled night and day to come!’

‘Too late, William; you must not ask it,’ said she, endeavouring to quiet him as in old times. ‘My husband just now is unwell. He will grow better in a day or two, maybe. You must call again and see him before you leave Casterbridge.’

As she said this their eyes met. Each was thinking of her lightsome words about taking them in turn; each thought that two-thirds of that promise had been fulfilled. But, as if it were unpleasant to her that this recollection should have arisen, she spoke again quickly: ‘Come again in a day or two, when my husband will be well enough to see you.’

Sir William departed without entering the house, and she returned to Sir John’s chamber. He, rising from his pillow, said, ‘To whom hast been talking, wife, in the courtyard? I heard voices there.’

She hesitated, and he repeated the question more impatiently.

‘I do not wish to tell you now,’ said she.

‘But I wooll know!’ said he.

Then she answered, ‘Sir William Hervy.’

‘By G——! I thought as much!’ cried Sir John, drops of perspiration standing on his white face. ‘A skulking villain! A sick man’s ears are keen, my lady. I heard that they were lover-like tones, and he called ’ee by your Christian name. These be your intrigues, my lady, when I am off my legs awhile!’

‘On my honour,’ cried she, ‘you do me a wrong. I swear I did not know of his coming!’

‘Swear as you will,’ said Sir John, ‘I don’t believe ’ee.’ And with this he taunted her, and worked himself into a greater passion, which much increased his illness. His lady sat still, brooding. There was that upon her face which had seldom been there since her marriage; and she seemed to think anew of what she had so lightly said in the days of her freedom, when her three lovers were one and all coveting her hand. ‘I began at the wrong end of them,’ she murmured. ‘My God—that did I!’

‘What?’ said he.

‘Nothing,’ said she. ‘I spoke to myself only.’

It was somewhat strange that after this day, while she went about the house with even a sadder face than usual, her churlish husband grew worse; and what was more, to the surprise of all, though to the regret of few, he died a fortnight later. Sir William had not called upon him as he had promised, having

received a private communication from Lady Penelope, frankly informing him that to do so would be inadvisable, by reason of her husband's temper.

Now when Sir John was gone, and his remains carried to his family burying-place in another part of England, the lady began in due time to wonder whither Sir William had betaken himself. But she had been cured of precipitancy (if ever woman were), and was prepared to wait her whole lifetime a widow if the said Sir William should not reappear. Her life was now passed mostly within the walls, or in promenading between the pleasure and the bowling-green; and she very seldom went even so far as the high road which then skirted the grounds on the north, though it has now, and for many years, been diverted to the south side. Her patience was rewarded (if love be in any case a reward); for one day, many months after her second husband's death, a messenger arrived at her gate with the intelligence that Sir William Hervy was again in Casterbridge, and would be glad to know if it were her pleasure that he should wait upon her.

It need hardly be said that permission was joyfully granted, and within two hours her lover stood before her, a more thoughtful man than formerly, but in all essential respects the same man, generous, modest to diffidence, and sincere. The reserve which womanly decorum threw over her manner was but too obviously artificial, and when he said 'The ways of Providence are strange,' and added after a moment, 'and merciful likewise,' she could not conceal her agitation, and burst into tears upon his neck.

'But this is too soon,' she said, starting back.

'But no,' said he. 'You are eleven months gone in widowhood, and it is not as if Sir John had been a good husband to you.'

His visits grew pretty frequent now, as may well be guessed, and in a month or two he began to urge her to an early union. But she counselled a little longer delay.

'Why?' said he. 'Surely I have waited long! Life is short; we are getting older every day, and I am the last of the three.'

'Yes,' said the lady frankly. 'And that is why I would not have you hasten. Our marriage may seem so strange to everybody, after my unlucky remark on that occasion we know so well, and which so many others know likewise, thanks to talebearers.'

On this representation he conceded a little space, for the sake of her good name. But the destined day of their marriage at last arrived, and it was a gay time for the villagers and all concerned,

and the bells in the parish church rang from noon till night. Thus at last she was united to the man who had loved her the most tenderly of them all, who but for his reticence might perhaps have been the first to win her. Often did he say to himself, 'How wondrous that her words should have been fulfilled! Many a truth hath been spoken in jest, but never a more remarkable one.' The noble lady herself preferred not to dwell on the coincidence, a certain shyness, if not shame, crossing her fair face at any allusion thereto.

But people will have their say, sensitive souls or none, and their sayings on this third occasion took a singular shape. 'Surely,' they whispered, 'there is something more than chance in this. . . . The death of the first was possibly natural; but what of the death of the second, who ill-used her; and whom, loving the third so desperately, she must have wished out of the way?'

Then they pieced together sundry trivial incidents of Sir John's illness, and dwelt upon the indubitable truth that he had grown worse after her lover's unexpected visit, till a very sinister theory was built up as to the hand she may have had in Sir John's premature demise. But nothing of this suspicion was said openly, for she was a lady of noble birth—nobler, indeed, than either of her husbands—and what people suspected they feared to express in formal accusation.

The mansion that she occupied had been left to her for so long a time as she should choose to reside in it, and, having a regard for the spot, she had coaxed Sir William to remain there. But in the end it was unfortunate; for one day, when in the full tide of his happiness, he was walking among the willows near the gardens, where he overheard a conversation between some basket-makers who were cutting the osiers for their use. In this fatal dialogue the suspicions of the neighbouring townsfolk were revealed to him for the first time. On his return home he seemed to have aged years.

But he said nothing; indeed, it was a thing impossible. And from that hour an estrangement began. She could not understand it, and simply waited. One day he said, however, 'I must go abroad.'

'But why?' said she. 'William, have I offended you?'

'No,' said he; 'but I must go.'

She could coax little more out of him, and in itself there was nothing unnatural in his departure, for he had been a wanderer

from his youth. In a few days he started off, apparently quite another man than he who had rushed to her side so devotedly a few months before.

It is not known when, or how, the rumours, which were thick in the atmosphere around her, actually reached the Lady Penelope's ears, but that they did reach her there is no doubt. Then a reason for her husband's departure occurred to her appalled mind, and a loss of health became quickly apparent. She dwindled thin in the face, and the veins in her temples could all be distinctly traced. An inner fire seemed to be withering her away. Her rings fell off her fingers, and her arms hung like the flails of the threshers, though they had till lately been so round and so beautiful. She wrote to her husband repeatedly, begging him to return to her; but he, being in extreme and wretched doubt—moreover, knowing nothing of her ill-health, and never suspecting that the rumours had reached her also, deemed absence best, and postponed his return awhile, giving various good reasons for his delay.

At length, however, when the Lady Penelope had given birth to a still-born child, her mother, the countess, addressed a letter to Sir William, requesting him to come back to her if he wished to see her alive; since she was wasting away of some mysterious disease, which seemed to be rather mental than physical. It was evident that his mother-in-law knew nothing of the secret, for she lived at a distance; but Sir William promptly hastened home, and stood beside the bed of his now dying wife.

‘Believe me, William,’ she said when they were alone, ‘I am innocent—innocent.’

‘Of what?’ said he. ‘Heaven forbid that I should accuse you of anything!’

‘But you do accuse me—silently!’ she gasped. ‘I could not write thereon—and ask you to hear me. It was too much, too degrading. But would that I had been less proud! They suspect me of poisoning him, William! But I am innocent of that wicked crime. He died naturally. I loved you—too soon; but that was all!’

Nothing availed to save her. The worm had gnawed too far into her heart before Sir William's return for anything to be remedial now; and in a few weeks she breathed her last. After her death the people spoke louder, and her conduct became a subject of public discussion. A little later on, the physician, who had attended the late Sir John, heard the rumour, and came down

from the place near London to which he latterly had retired, with the express purpose of calling upon Sir William Hervy, now staying in Casterbridge.

He stated that, at the request of a relative of Sir John's, who wished to be assured on the matter by reason of its suddenness, he had, with the assistance of a surgeon, made a private examination of Sir John's body immediately after his decease, and found that it had resulted from purely natural causes. Nobody at this time had breathed a suspicion of foul play, and therefore nothing was said which might since have established her innocence.

It being thus placed beyond doubt that this beautiful and noble lady had been done to death by a wicked scandal that was wholly unfounded, her husband was stung with a dreadful remorse at the share he had taken in her misfortunes, and left the country anew, this time never to return alive. He survived her but a few years, and his body was brought home and buried beside his wife's under the tomb which is still visible in the parish church. Until lately there was a good portrait of her, in weeds for her first husband, with a cross in her hand, at the ancestral seat of her family, where she was much pitied, as she deserved to be. Yet there were some severe enough to say—and these not unjust persons in other respects—that though unquestionably innocent of the crime imputed to her, she had shown an unseemly wantonness in contracting three marriages in such rapid succession; and that the untrue suspicion might have been ordered by Providence (who often works indirectly) as a punishment for her self-indulgence. Upon that point I have no opinion to offer.

THOMAS HARDY.

The 'Donna' in 1889.

I. BY THE AUTHOR OF 'CHARLES LOWDER.'

A TRUCK for bringing hot nourishing food daily at half its cost to men out of work: this is the answer to the many who ask us, 'What is the "Donna"?' Most generously has it been supported for five years by the readers of *Longman's*, and yet, having no list of regular subscribers, every year we hope for fresh benefactors to take the place of those whose gifts were made but for once. It is true that there are few things harder than to give without doing harm; the difficulty lies in the very conditions of our existence here—of this mingled web of good and ill. And yet the old words, 'Bear ye one another's burdens,' keep their force, and eagerness to help others would seem the most natural attitude of mind for those upon whom the imperative need of help to bear their own burdens will certainly come sooner or later, be they rich or poor. All this makes it a matter of the greatest satisfaction to those responsible for the 'Donna' that her work has come triumphantly out of the great trial of the late strike; since, on whatever side sympathies might be, they would have been placed in an entirely false position with subscribers to the fund had it contributed largely to the support of the strikers. The article by the editor in the October number of the magazine, 'The "Donna" and the Strike,' makes it needless to say more on the subject than to allude to the remarkable fact that during the strike the demand for food was less at the 'Donna' than during the same weeks last year, the men seeming to feel that it would not be fair 'to avail themselves of relief not intended for them,' so that the difficulty never arose as to 'whether it would be right to employ money subscribed for the benefit of men out of work because there was no work to do, in feeding men on strike.'

One of the best results of the work at the 'Donna' is perhaps the occasion for charity to each other among the poorest, and that of a kind which cannot do harm, but must, we hope, be

'twice blessed;' for it is not treating each other to drink, when possibly flush of money, but to wholesome warm food with hardly spared halfpence. One day lately a man asked at the 'Donna' for a shilling's worth of halfpence. 'I'm only a working man myself, mother,' he said, 'but I want to give it among the others. I have been five weeks on the strike, so I know what it is to be hungry; but I've earned two-and-sixpence this morning, and I want to help the other fellows.' After distributing the halfpence, he returned in a few minutes asking for eightpence more change, followed by a crowd of men; he seemed much excited. 'I tell you I am only a working man, and I have spent a shilling of my earnings upon you; I've had nothing to eat myself, and my old woman at home will want a share.' 'That shows you have a good heart,' said one. The end was that he threw the rest of the halfpence among the crowd and we saw him no more.

'Please, Sister, can you let me have something to eat?' was the petition of one pale-faced man. The Sister put her hand out for the money, but he said, 'I have nothing, lady, but I'm *so* hungry.'

The Sister had to say that it was against rules to give. The poor fellow was silent; but he was too wise to take 'no' for an answer, evidently understanding the maxim that 'All things come to those who wait;' and wait he did, with his sorrowful eyes fixed on those who were eating ha'porths of stew, and tingling hot 'suety.' At last a man with a face the hue of india-rubber, and wearing tattered clothes, who had been eating his dinner, looked up and asked him why he waited. The next moment he led the hungry one by the hand to the counter, ordered and paid for a basin of stew for him, saying in a low voice, 'Sister, I know what it is to be hungry.'

I do not like giving an account of the food-truck to its supporters without myself seeing the work and helping in it. A short walk from Mark Lane Station brings one to London Bridge, and descending the stairs we find ourselves in Lower Thames Street. The name might have suggested very pleasant ideas—sunny, rippling waters, wooded banks, boating, summer days in the neighbourhood of Pangbourne or Henley. But when we are in that part of Thames Street nearest to the London Docks we seem so far away from everything pleasant that, if we remember the beautiful things of life at all, we remember them only with a heartache.

Here we are in the midst of men and women whose lives and surroundings are utterly without beauty and joy. We have, as it were, said good-bye for a time to all bright, glad, fair things.

Down the narrow lanes we get glimpses of the river that has given its name to this street. Can it really be the Thames we have known in sweet country places? Dock labourers are toiling up from the waterside, carrying on their heads heavy weights—great boxes of oranges, or bales of wool. These are the lucky ones, who have found work after weary waiting. Their less fortunate brethren are not far to seek. Thames Street is full of them: they jostle us as they hurry past, and one glance at the haggard faces and worn clothing shows us that these are the 'unemployed,' whom all the world talks of, and whom no one seems able to help effectually.

We had plenty of time for such reflections, having arranged to meet the 'Donna' truck at the iron booth within railings where the food is sold, and having arrived too soon; but as twelve o'clock struck she appeared in sight, escorted by a Sister and a man to unload her. We crowded into the little booth and were soon hard at work. It was a strange scene. The Sister, my friend and I, the only women in sight—and all around us, about twenty deep, a crowd of the roughest, most haggard-looking wretches possible to imagine.

On the outskirts of the throng were the diners, rapidly swallowing their modicum of soup, or breaking the prized slice of bread into it. The lines of the hard-drawn faces relax, the colour comes to the wan lips under the influence of this frugal meal. Yet one poor fellow thrust his half-empty bowl into the hands of a comrade leaning hopelessly against the iron palings, unable to find even one halfpenny, saying, 'Here, man, yer wants it worsen nor me.'

A woman at the opposite corner was trying to sell hot coffee, but no one was buying. 'Why don't you go to the coffee-stall, instead of waiting so long for the soup?' we asked a great, gaunt fellow who would have been none the worse for a shave and a general brush-up.

'Cos it don't fill yer, it don't stay yer, like this 'ere stuff,' he said, pointing to Sister's soup-cans. 'Yer feel ye've got summut inside o' yer when ye've chucked down a ha'porth o' that.'

'It will be a real help if you will serve out the pudding while I ladle out the soup,' the Sister said. 'See, the knife is notched, so that you cannot help cutting each slice the proper thickness.' She put a round cylinder, that looked about a yard long, into my

left hand, and the notched knife into the right, and instructed me to let the savoury mess slide gently out, cutting off the slices as it did so. It really was not a difficult operation, but it made one feel nervous to see six or seven hands held over the pudding-tin, ready to close on the steaming slab the instant it fell beneath the knife. 'Please, that's a small lot,' objected the customer to whose share the end piece fell; and I could hardly bear his disappointed look.

'We always put two ends together,' whispered Sister, and the malcontent was more than satisfied.

The little 'Donna' works every weekday in the year, except seven. Sometimes the Sisters have tried to shut it up for a week instead of two days at Christmas or Easter, but the wail of anguish and disappointment from our poor clients has been too much for them.

My last visit was before the strike began. On November 8, the Sister in charge writes to me: 'As to the work which has been done here, it was a great increase during the first part of the year on the corresponding months last year; but latterly there is an immense decrease in numbers served, owing partly to the good summer and revival of work, and also during the strike we fed many fewer, as the unemployed depend much on those in work for halfpennies, and of course the men on strike would not give to others. Of the results of the strike we, as outsiders, can say but little; from our experience, if it has done good to some, it has so impoverished others that they probably will not recover it during the winter. We of course were perfectly neutral, and continued our food trucks to the workmen inside the docks as usual. Strange to say, we were allowed by the strikers to take our food into the docks, though they would not allow others to do so. Sometimes they threatened to upset our barrows, but they never did, though they knew we were feeding the so-called "blacklegs." This pleased us very much, as it showed that the men trusted us, and knew us to be their friends. The poverty at the time was awful to witness—men, women, and children in many cases on the verge of starvation; for though many got food tickets, others got none, and the misery in the houses was terrible.'

Now that the weather has become chilly there is a great run on the stew. The men often say, 'Stir it up, Sister, and see if you can't find a 'tater.' One lucky customer who had got a 'tater was keeping it as a *bonne-bouche* for the last, when a shivering little chap appeared outside the rails. The 'tater was instantly

ladled out and poked through the bars into the eager open mouth of the boy, who smacked his lips again and again over the delightful morsel.

'Please, lady, give me a penn'orth of pudding,' said a most respectable-looking man who had evidently come down in the world. Two slices were handed to him; then there was a fumbling in his pocket and a clinking of money—then a pause. 'I think I'll only have one slice, lady.' Sister longed to know what had caused the change in his plans, and after a little beating about the bush the reason came out: 'If I have a penn'orth I shall only have threepence halfpenny left, and my lodging costs fourpence; so, lady, I must be content with a ha'porth to-day.' This was said with a smile that tried hard to be bright. While Sister is hard at work cutting up puddings a man in the background stretches over and shouts out, 'Sister, will you let me have something for this?' and he waves a dirty little newspaper parcel over the heads of the waiting customers. Sister stopped in the midst of her carving to attend to him. When she opened the little packet she found wrapped in several bits of paper a penny stamp—dirty, for it had evidently been picked up in the street—but the Queen's head was uninjured, so he was quickly handed two pieces of pudding—one plain, one plum. One very nice civil man always comes to the 'Donna' and buys a penn'orth of pudding every day—one piece for himself, and one for his son. He told us he was very nearly blind. 'I used to be in good work there once, Sister,' pointing to some warehouses opposite—'for many a year; but my sight became so bad I was obliged to leave, and now I have to depend for my living upon any job I can get in the streets, and I fear I shall soon be blind. There, it can't be helped,' said he, smiling, 'I have to put up with it.'

It is, of course, generally impossible amidst the crowd and hurry around the 'Donna' (as all have to be served in an hour) to become acquainted with individual cases. A few days ago, however, one of the Sisters noticed a man inside the enclosure as tidily dressed as his poor garments allowed of. A friend 'stood him' a basin of stew, and he looked so soldierly, but so sad, his whole bearing so different from those around him, that the Sister longed to ask him about his circumstances, and when nearly all were served, beckoned to him to come and speak to her. 'Lady,' he said very quietly, and with quite the manner of a gentleman, 'I have been a groom in a gentleman's family, and I have been a great deal out in India. When I returned to my old home in the County Clare, I found all my own people dead, except my

youngest sister, and she was busy enough with a husband and family of little ones. I was more than three years with Captain N——. He has now gone to India; I would write to him if I knew his address; I have excellent papers, but they are over in Ireland. I have been in London three weeks, trying to find work; a friend has paid my lodging, but he can't do it any more, and, Sister, I've lost heart now; I must walk the streets to-night—I have nothing else left me. I shall go to Sheerness to-morrow; I might find some old friends there among the soldiers—I have been so much with them.'

The Sister told him to go to their Night Refuge—the 'Friend in Need'—where he would find the food and rest he sorely needed, and where his case could be considered, and probably permanent help given by finding out his friends and putting him in the way to make a fresh start.

I was anxious, besides visiting the 'Donna,' to see this new Night Refuge, prepared during the last year for some of her poor customers, the building in Cooper's Court having been found too small. Turning to the left on issuing from Aldgate Station, about eight minutes' walk brought us through Mansell Street, on the right, to Tenter Street, E., where a large building, formerly a gun factory, has now been turned into a sleeping-place for deserving men in destitution, and is called the 'Friend in Need.' It has one great advantage: the walls are of abnormal thickness, no doubt to support the weight of the guns, and this makes the rooms easier to warm and to keep warm. It is three stories high, with an underground floor. Many men were waiting at the door. They are not admitted before six, but we came a little earlier to inspect the new premises. Passing through a small ward containing twelve hammocks, a steep ladder staircase brought us to the underground floor, which is taken up by the sitting-room, filled with benches and tables, covered with illustrated papers, games, &c., the walls bright with pictures. There is a back room on the ground floor containing fifty beds, and two rooms upstairs—in all 160 beds. Then a sort of recess off the kitchen, fitted up with a long bench and tin jugs and basins, made a very fair lavatory; and the provision for a good wash is greatly valued by the better class of men.

'It's such a thing to get the dirt off you,' one man said; 'it makes you feel twice the man.'

'Ay, and it gives you twice the chance of getting a job, too, that I know,' said another

And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined, and wanted food.

What wonder that the crowd push hastily in! All they ask for is there—warmth and shelter, food and rest. The accommodation afforded here to the weary travellers is anything but luxurious; indeed it is almost Spartan in its simplicity. There is, it is true, a good fire in the middle of the room, and plenty of bright gas-light overhead; but the rest of the preparations are extremely meagre. Narrow canvas hammock beds, hardly raised above the floor, are ranged closely side by side round the room; the bedding (sheets, blankets, &c.) being all comprised in one article—a leather counterpane. Yet for beds such as this hundreds of weary, heart-sick men wait night after night outside the Refuge doors.

'The dregs and scum of society!' some may exclaim. Alas! no. The very respectability of the greater number of these poor men is the saddest sight of all. Some are labourers—quiet, decent-looking fellows; some artisans; not a few seem to have been clerks, to judge by their threadbare black coats and educated speech. They all, when questioned, tell in different words the same sad tale. 'Out of work' is the beginning, middle, and end of it.

'The beds are very good,' one man said when questioned, 'and so is the food—warms you rarely—and it is a comfort to sit down. It's dreadful—real awful—to have to keep walking, walking on all night through, when you can hardly drag one leg after t'other. But you must do it, or the police are down on you directly. No, the frosty nights ain't the worst, nor yet the windy ones; it's the rainy nights that do for you. Look here!' He lifted up his foot and showed a boot literally without a sole, regularly tramped through. 'The rain soon gets through boots like these, and then the chill creeps right up you and seems to turn you to lead.'

'There's only one fault in this 'ere place,' broke in another man, 'and that is, it's too small—a deal too small for all that want to come. I'm in for the night, and glad enough I am; but a mate of mine stands outside in the rain now, and there's hundreds dragging themselves along the embankments and the streets, same as I was last night. It's fearful! 'tis indeed, to be shivering all night in the streets, and never a hot cup of tea or anything to begin the next day with. I'm *that* sorry for those outside—only I can't rightly give speech to all I mean.'

'I would work at anything, Sister—*anything*—even for a

shilling a day,' the poor fellows say so earnestly, and no one could look into their faces and doubt it. They will patiently endure the miseries of a night-long tramp, through the streets of this great city, with an endurance that is truly noble.

They may not rest, tired out as they are after the day's unsuccessful search for work, for even the stone bench and flagged doorsteps are denied them. 'Move on,' says the policeman, and on they go, often limping painfully from festering sores on the feet. Ah, what feet the Sisters have seen, and dressed with their own hands, too, in the course of one winter! What does such a wanderer think as he trudges through the silent streets, past happy homes where the warm firelight flickers on the window curtains, and little children are slumbering in their warm nests, and the inmates are lying down to take their rest in warmth and comfort, while, without, cold and darkness and despair are *his* portion?

Well, we cannot, of course, read his heart, but this we can say, that never is word of murmur heard from the guests at the Night Refuge.

'Ay, I was out all last night, and all the night afore, but, thank God! I've got a good roof over me to-night.'

These are the words that fall from the pale lips of our haggard friends. Words of thankfulness, words of gratitude to God, and to those charitable ones who, by their alms, have opened to them a harbour of refuge.

But now the evening's business began. A lady arrived from the Restaurant at 42A Dock Street, and established herself at a table in the entrance-room, with a huge book, ruled with many columns, before her. Beside her stood the caretaker, an ex-policeman; the doors were opened, and each of the applicants for shelter filed before them. Those who had received a ticket for seven nights, their cases having been found satisfactory, passed at once to the lower room, there to rest until the nine o'clock supper of pea-soup and bread. But every new applicant came separately up to the table, and was closely questioned by the caretaker, the lady writing down the answers in the book—name, occupation, where the last night was spent, how long out of work, and, most important of all, references to former employers. Letters are written to the referees in every single case, and tickets for admission given to the men or not according to the answer. I was shown the column in the book containing notes of the replies. Often in glancing down a page there seemed

little except 'Good,' 'Satisfactory,' 'Excellent,' &c. In other pages were frequent entries of 'Unsatisfactory,' 'Bad,' 'No answer.'

'And if the reference is not satisfactory?'

'Then he'll have to go,' said the ex-policeman shortly; 'there's one of that sort coming here to-night, but we shan't let him in. My orders are: this place is to be a help to the men who are really seeking work, not a hotel for the loafers, who are best in the casual wards, where they make them work "willy-nilly."'

The system of demanding a reference from each man, and then endeavouring to find out whether that reference is satisfactory, has worked well.

Of course it is a somewhat laborious system, involving much correspondence; but it certainly sifts out to a great extent those who are undeserving of help, and in many cases the references bring very happy results. For instance, the head of a large drapery establishment wrote:—

'I remember J. H. well. He was a quiet, inoffensive man; if he likes to come here again he shall have work.'

It would have done anyone's heart good to see poor J. H. when this letter was shown him! Indeed, when a man hears that there is certainty of work for him his whole face and bearing seem to alter. He loses, as if by magic, the utterly dejected, 'beaten' look which is so distressing to witness.

One poor fellow the other day was telling us his troubles, and he ended up almost fiercely, 'I would go anywhere—*anywhere*—if only I could have employment. I don't care where or what it is; but I'm sick of *this*; and it comes into my mind sometimes that I'll put an end to myself. No hell could be much worse than the life I'm leading now.'

Yet this man was a skilled workman—a telegraph-instrument maker—and could earn sevenpence an hour in his trade. He had an excellent character, and was a man of some education. It was entirely through misfortune and slackness of trade that he had been brought so low. The Refuge gave him seven nights' shelter, for which he seemed most thankful after his terrible experience of the streets.

'I tried the casual ward once,' he said, 'but the company and their talk was worse than any amount of wind or rain outside. There are chaps you never see anywhere till you meet them in a "casual," and you come out, feeling yourself a disgraced man. Why, I felt afraid everyone I met would notice the smell

of the oakum I had been picking, and which stuck to my clothes all day. Bah! how I hated it!

When asked if he had been able to rest comfortably at the Refuge, this poor fellow spoke in a grateful, softened tone. Yes, he had been kindly spoken to, warmed and fed, and housed there, and life seemed just a little more endurable now. His whole manner showed that a rest at the 'Friend in Need' had done him good in every way.

The house has been nightly filled with guests who else would have tramped the streets in weary despair. It is *something* to feel that at least 160 of our fellow-creatures are safely sheltered; and who does not long to help in this merciful work and to bring a little comfort and hope into lives that are so dark and so fearfully different from our own?

One is told not seldom that it is only the undeserving who are really in distress. Let me tell of one case, amongst many set on their feet again by the 'Donna' and the 'Friend in Need,' which came under my own eye—a young shipwright, one of four hundred dismissed from Portsmouth Docks, for no fault of their own, but for lack of work. He came to seek it in London, and in direst distress found his way from the 'Donna' to the 'Refuge' and a sympathising friend in one of the Sisters. She mentioned his case to a lady who was happy enough to be able to procure him a situation as carpenter to a gentleman in Ireland, where I have seen and spoken with him, and was as much struck, as the Sister's account had led me to expect, by his refinement of tone and manner. His employer, with whom he has now lived for several months, speaks of him in highest terms, and says that he found he had considerable knowledge of Euclid and had made good progress in algebra. Yet, with an unspotted character and excellent testimonials, he told the Sister that he would do *any* work for a few shillings a week, and that he was so miserable he could scarcely resist the temptation to make away with himself.

I dwell the rather on the work of the 'Friend in Need,' because it is here that cases come from the 'Donna' to be dealt with individually and often permanently helped. I went down into the underground sitting-room when it was nearly full of men, and had talks with some of them. The messages of gratitude received afterwards for very slight services, which the knowledge of special cases enabled one to do, made me earnestly wish that gentlemen, and ladies also, could find their way every evening to Tenper Street. I think they would never go there

without finding some 'forlorn and shipwrecked brother' who would 'take heart again' at their kindness, and whom they could put in the way of earning a living. The Sisters do what they can in this way, but it is just the thing in which those living in the world would have more power to help. As it is, the helping-hand which the Sisters often give unconsciously is powerful indeed. One of them who had been serving at the 'Donna' was returning home when, amidst the noise and confusion of every kind around her, she felt that somebody was walking very close to her, and presently, to her great surprise, a well-dressed youth, hat in hand, addressed her. 'Sister,' he said, 'I came here to see you. I have felt I wanted to tell you what you have done for me—I wanted to thank you.' These sentences came out in shy jerks. The Sister assured him that it must be one of the other Sisters, and asked a few more questions. 'No, Sister, it was you. I don't say you actually got me the situation I have, but it was owing to you I tried for it. Don't you remember me coming one day some time ago to the truck? You believed and trusted me, and you spoke kindly to me. Sister, I had made one false step, and I had to leave home. I had lost heart; but something you said to me that day made me feel I must try again. You gave me hope, and I did try; and now I have a good situation, and my poor mother is so pleased; but it is all because of you and that bit of pudding. I have got to work to make up for the past; but, please God, I'll do it; but I did so want to tell you about it.' The lad's eyes were full of tears as he held the Sister's hand; and then, taking off his hat, he left her and walked on.

Another man came a short time ago to the Refuge, with his wife and boy, to give hearty thanks for the help it had been to him last winter. It was, he said, the saving of his life; and now he had got into work again he could not help coming to acknowledge gratefully the help and encouragement he had received in sore need. Last winter more than 3,000 men were received. The cost of a man's food—pea-soup and bread at night, cocoa and bread in the morning—is fourpence halfpenny a day.

From the 'Friend in Need' we went, as it was Thursday, to the weekly 'Social evening' for men, in the large room upstairs at 42A Dock Street, where we found about a hundred and twenty. They are admitted by ticket, weeded out from customers at the 'Donna' and guests in Tenter Street. Only a cup of coffee and slice of bread and butter, with a little tobacco, are supplied, but they seemed to be enjoying themselves thoroughly, smoking and

singing songs, and listening to music provided by ladies who go there to play and sing on Thursday evenings. Who will help in this way? Certainly their musical talents could scarcely give more pleasure or profit than at Dock Street. At nine o'clock, I think, folding-doors were opened at one end of the room, where was a little oratory, and any men who liked remained for a mission service and address. It was conducted, on this day, by the Sisters and an officer in the army. About a hundred men remained for it.

I cannot end without a little account of a visit to another offshoot, so to speak, from the 'Donna'—the workroom in Cannon Street for the wives of the unemployed—given in the words of a friend who had been induced to go and see it for herself.

'I was quite glad when we arrived there at last,' she wrote, 'and I could forget the unlovely surroundings and dreadful streets, while I talked to some of the poor souls who were busily stitching in the mission room. Seven or eight of them were over seventy years of age, and were in the habit of coming to the workroom three times a week, for half a day's work, receiving a wage of 2s. 3d. for the three afternoons—not a large sum, but real riches to them, helping them at least to keep the rent paid. All this I learnt from the Sister whom we found going in and out among the women, giving a little help to one and a word of encouragement to another. Eyes and hands are apt to be feeble at seventy years of age.

"You see," said the Sister, holding up a many-coloured petticoat, "this will be a nice warm garment when it is finished—it is made out of patterns of material which a shop-keeper kindly sent us; and this quilt has been put together in the same way. It will be a great comfort to some poor body when the winter comes."

"This room will be closed this week," said one; "and oh! I don't know *when* it will be opened again. It must cost a lot of money to pay so many of us; and Sister says it just depends upon the money coming in whether it will be kept closed for long or not. The little earnings are a real blessing to us all. Why, I remember one day last year my children had only had a bit of bread for their breakfast, and I had no dinner to give them, but I promised they should have a good tea. They went off to school quite pleased at that. Then I came round here, expecting to get an afternoon's work; but oh! ma'am, the rooms were closed. I was so disappointed I felt ready to drop on the doorstep as I thought of the little ones, and how they would cry when they came home, and found I hadn't a bite to give 'em. The neigh-

hours were very kind; they gave me some cold tea and a few scraps, but the children did look cruel pinched that night when bedtime came. We poor folks can feel for each other, you see, ma'am, 'cos we all *knows what hunger is*. I've been ill myself ever since baby were born, but I can sit here quietly and sew, and it's *such* a comfort to feel I'm earning enough to pay the rent. It's hard for us, the closing of this room, that it is!"

"We have come to the end of our money, I am grieved to say," said Sister N——, "and we are forced to close the room till more is sent us. For some time we have only been able to employ the women three times a week instead of every day; but that is more than we could afford to do last year, so we have great cause to be thankful."

'During the drive home my friend and I talked over many plans for helping these poor women, and the result was that, after a consultation with my husband, we found that by practising a little economy, we could manage to send a considerable donation to the Sisters.'

In giving an account of the work which the readers of *Longman's* have so largely supported, the difficulty has been to omit, since much has grown out of the establishment of the 'Donna.' When first the Editor made his appeal, there was but one truck of food for the unemployed; this grew into four, but owing to the diminution in the number of the unemployed it has only been necessary to send two this year. Seven trucks in all are despatched every day from the Restaurant in Dock Street, five being to men in work, who pay the cost of the food.

It may be worth saying how greatly magazines and papers of all kinds are prized, both for the Night Refuge and for Thursday evenings. More than a hundred a week are needed, as the men are terribly disappointed if there is no supply. It would be a most real act of charity to send some of those periodicals which often load our shelves, or are thrown away, to the Sister in charge, 42A Dock Street.

II. STATEMENT BY THE EDITOR.

The annual record of the doings of the 'Donna' forms a barometer by which an estimate may be formed of the state of the labour market in the East of London. This year it is fortunately possible to report that the barometer is rising. An examination of the following table, showing the number of men served in the two years from November 1887 to October 1888, and

from November 1888 to October 1889 will show this clearly. In July 1888 the number of men served rose heavily, and the rise continued till it culminated in October, when the highest number of men ever served by the 'Donna'—viz. 20,275—was reached. In October 1889 the number served was barely half—viz. 10,265. The improvement commenced in April and has continued ever since. The strike seems to have affected the 'Donna' very little, and the explanation of this—so creditable to the dock labourers—has been referred to in the October number.

STATISTICAL TABLE.

Number of men served at the 'Donna' in the last two years.

Date	Men served	Date	Men served
1887 November . .	13899	1888 November . .	14502
December . .	9799	December . .	12123
1888 January . .	13930	1889 January . .	16414
February . .	12442	February . .	12549
March . .	11123	March . .	11640
April . .	11432	April . .	10481
May . .	12661	May . .	11563
June . .	8973	June . .	6241
July . .	13171	July . .	6516
August . .	13764	August . .	9261
September . .	12949	September . .	8208
October . .	20275	October . .	10265
Total . .	154418	Total . .	129763

In spite, therefore, of the heavy increase during the first three months, the total number of men served is 24,655 less than last year, and over 13,000 less than the previous year.

This more favourable aspect of affairs is also observable in the financial statement. While the balance in favour of the 'Donna' was diminished last year by no less than 120*l.*, this year the income has slightly exceeded the expenditure. This improvement is most satisfactory, but it must be borne in mind that it is partly due to the fact of our having received 386*l.* 11*s.* 10*d.* in subscriptions, an increase of 35*l.* 15*s.* 10*d.* over the 350*l.* 16*s.* received last year. It is, therefore, necessary again to appeal to the friends who have stood by us so generously for the means to continue the work. If the time when the 'Donna' can be closed for want of work seems still far distant, it will be a source of satisfaction to the subscribers that the tide at any rate seems to have turned, and that, so far as we can judge, the amount of distress is distinctly less than it was a year ago.

For Life.

A FIGHT for his life with a horse!
 A man, for his life, with a horse!
 A terrible grappling of strong young arms,
 Lusty, but almost o'erpowered.
 Life or death in the struggle:
 Life, full-pulsing and joyous,
 A young man's life in its spring-tide,
 Or Death, still-faced and grey.

'Ah! see you not 'tis a groom,
 Who is training a vicious brute
 From the stud of my Lady Diana?'
 Yes; but a groom loves life,
 And now he must fight for it madly,
 With clenched teeth, grim in their setting,
 And dark eyes glittering fiercely,
 While he feels his muscles relaxing.

All very well in the Gardens,
 Where there is space sufficient,
 But before him the Park gates widen,
 And all the stream of a city
 Pours into Piccadilly.

As in a vision he sees it,
 That swirling, eddying torrent:
 Lo! now it runs like blood,
 Slowly and sluggishly here,
 Blocked by excess of traffic.
 As in a vision he sees it,
 Heavy and thick and slow-moving,
 Crawling, creeping before him,

Right in the teeth of his coming,
His terrible, headlong on-coming.

Is it a horse he is riding,
Or the demon of Death incarnate,
That with wide nostril distended,
And wicked, hot ears back-turning,
Gathers its awful strength
From foam-wreathed flank to shoulder?

Now for one mighty endeavour,
One more bracing of sinews!
If the brute conquer at last,
He shall know he'd a man to deal with.
He shall know, by the bloody mouth-piece,
By the sudden grip as of iron,
Throwing him back on his haunches,
While the red spume shows redder,
Flung in the face of the rider.

He shall know it, though he recover,
Mad with the strength of his fury,
Pausing only a moment
To gather fresh force for the on-leap,
And to plough his horrid passage
Through that sullen human river.

Now for muscle to muscle!
Now for the final contest!
But the rider's cheek it is ashen,
And the fearful grip on the curb-rein
Is the clutch of his stiffening fingers.

A fight for his life with a horse!
A man, for his life, with a horse!
The groom of the Lady Diana—
Yes! but a man for all that.
Call him a man for one minute,
Give him some brief adulation.
If he be king or servant,
It will matter little directly;
Monarchs and grooms turn to clay,
And we speak softly of either,
With reverent pity of either.
A man—not a groom—for one minute.

What! is the tragedy over?
They are crowding about the gateway.
Follow and learn the sequel,
How a groom fought with the devil,
How a young man fell fighting,
How a king died in the battle!
Yes! a king. Do not wonder,
Though I say it with sudden passion.
Ah! I am sick: is it over?
Constable, say, did you see it?
Did you see—the king—fall?
The young man—whatever you call him—
The groom of the Lady Diana?

What do they say, the people?
'Somebody caught at the bridle
Just as his strength gave over;
Somebody caught at the bridle!'

Here through the crowd parted,
Who is this that comes striding?
Monarch or groom that comes striding?
Demon or horse is he leading?
See! the brute noses him kindly,
Asks of him dumb forgiveness.
Poor silly horse!—not a demon.
Poor tired boy!—not a monarch.
Now Heaven defend you, young hero,
Though you may stammer and redden,
Because the horse had the best of it.
Well, yes, the brute is a beauty;
And you—why, you did your duty,
And God will take care of the rest of it.

NINA F. LAYARD

The Home of Charlotte Brontë.

ON Monday, the 30th of September last—a solemn, still autumnal day, with red and yellow foliage tinting the landscape on every side, and with pale, shadowy vapours wreathing every rocky hill-top—I beheld for the first time a certain barren Yorkshire moor, familiar to the mind's eye of every lover of 'Jane Eyre,' 'Shirley,' or 'Villette.' At last I was at Haworth—bleak, rude, grim Haworth; Haworth, within whose rough-hewn boundaries was lived out that strange, isolated family life, so monotonous and uneventful outwardly, so charged with passion and intensity within, which has made the hitherto unknown little village among the hills famous for evermore.

Much as railway penetration has done to open up the moorland regions of the north of England, it has effected here but little change. Upon leaving the platform of a small, primitive station we mounted the steep and narrow little street—(it might have been the original of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Hill called Straight)—and steeper and steeper it rose in front of us at every step; while down its centre there presently poured, with a clatter, clatter, clatter of wooden clogs, the village lads and lasses just let loose from school, each lusty urchin clad in such a suit of brown corduroys as must have set at nought the rudest blasts of winter, to say nothing of rugged walls and gnarled branches. (N.B.—Shall I confess that straightway I bought in the open street a suit for my own little climber, and wearer, and tearer; and that only the vision of parquet floors and Persian rugs prevented a pair of the sturdy, brass-bound clogs being added to the purchase?)

'Could anybody show us the way to Mr. Brown's?' was our first inquiry, Mr. Brown being the nephew of that Martha Brown who, it may be remembered, was the 'new girl' who succeeded Tabby, when Tabby's days at Haworth parsonage were numbered. A mite of four was told off to trot in front of the ladies to the neat little stationer's shop, within which stood Martha Brown's

nephew, only too glad to lead the way up his little back staircase to the room wherein was laid out all he had to show pertaining to the revered family, in whose service his old relation had lived the best part of her life.

And now I must just remark that it is a mistake to suppose that the memory of the Brontës is dying out in the place which once knew them so well. Every old villager we spoke to—and these were not a few—had something to say, and usually some reminiscence to offer on the subject. The names of ‘Charlotte,’ ‘Emily,’ and ‘Branwell’ dropped easily and familiarly from their lips; and yet there was nothing impertinent, nothing the least disrespectful, in the sound: it merely seemed as if these simple folks cherished a hallowed remembrance, with which any of the ordinary forms of speech would have been incompatible.

One nice little matron, with a chastened, subdued demeanour and a face that plainly told life had been to her no child’s play, had perhaps more to tell than all the rest about the Brontës. She had seen ‘Mrs. Nicholls’ pass into the church in her bridal attire on the wedding morn—‘very plain, but Charlotte always was very plain in her dress;’ and again had seen her re-enter the same churchyard gates but a few brief months later, when carried to her grave. ‘She was never very intimate, never at all *free-spoken* with the Haworth people.’ ‘Oh, they liked her; nobody had ever a word against her; but it was understood that she, and indeed all the family, liked best to be let alone. Charlotte would come and go. She was a very quick walker, and she would turn the corner of the parsonage lane and be down the street all in a moment; and then she would drop into the shop’—(we were sitting in ‘the shop’ as we listened)—‘order what she wanted, and be off home again at once, without a word more than was needed. My father,’ continued the narrator, ‘had always himself to take the cloth, or whatever it was that had been ordered, up to the parsonage, when his work was done; and he had to measure it there, and cut off the length required. No, none of them would ever have it measured and cut off in the shop; it had to be taken up in the piece to the house, and cut there. The Brontës had ways of their own, and that was one of them. They were strange people, but very much beloved. Mr. Brontë was a fine old gentleman,’ (with a sudden little glow of warmth), ‘a *very fine* old gentleman,’ (most emphatically); and the speaker had heard that there were some who had written about Charlotte, and made up books about her; ‘who had not spoken quite true about

Mr. Brontë.' All she could say was that 'there was no one in Haworth now living who had not a good word for the old gentleman, and to see him and Mr. Nicholls together after they were left alone, and poor Mr. Brontë so helpless and blind, was just a beautiful sight—that it was.' She would have discoursed till midnight, but time pressed.

We had to move on, and to hearken to others. In one quarter the pervading feeling was indignation that so much had been done, as well as left undone, in order to efface the memory of the family in the place. 'There was a memorial promised,' we were assured. 'It was promised when the new church was built, and it was said right out in a sermon too; but we have never heard one word more on the subject from that day to this.' My somewhat trite rejoinder that Charlotte Brontë's best memorial would be in their hearts and ours did not give full satisfaction; nor, to be sure, did I feel any in uttering it. Her *best* it might be, her *only* one it ought not to be.

To return, however, to Martha Brown's collection. It was pathetically poor and scanty, I am afraid I must confess; though I trust her very obliging and intelligent nephew, its present possessor, will never know I have said so. Marvellously little of this world's goods had those poor Brontës, and of course the better portion of these—such as they were—were not here. Their oak cradle I had seen in another part of Yorkshire that very morning, and Charlotte's doll's tea-set I treasure among my own valuables.¹ A few gold hair-rings of enormous size, such as could only have been worn by the venerable patriarch on his forefinger, a fob-seal, and some Paisley shawls—none of which could with any certainty be traced as the property of any one nearer than *an aunt*—had also been shown me in the little nook where the cradle was installed. All of these had been sold, on the passing of Haworth living into other hands. They had not been bequeathed either to friends or relatives. Martha Brown, however, had been given the relics which were now shown us; they were laid out in a small glass-case, and consisted of a green purse of netted silk, a thimble-case of enamelled copper, and a few more such odds and ends. There were also some shawls (presumably belonging to the afore-mentioned aunt, for I am positive Charlotte never draped herself in anything so gorgeous), and a number of elementary pencil drawings of eyes, noses, and other interesting

¹ It is of old Leeds ware, ornamented by little pictures of the principal features of the surrounding country.

features, such as might be supposed to have been laboured through by reluctant and unskilful school-girl fingers. As far as I can judge, none of the Brontës had the slightest real talent for drawing. The oil-painting of the spaniel which has the place of honour over the mantelpiece in Mr. Brown's little upper chamber is simply ludicrous from its badness.

One or two really interesting objects were, however, lying on the centre table. These were Charlotte's own time-worn copies of the *Quarterly* for December 1848, and other periodicals of a like date, in which were inserted those miserable criticisms which were meant to crush the author of 'Jane Eyre.' How often, we reflected, had her brow been bent over those cruel pages? We know they made her heart bleed, and that for the moment she fancied she read in them her doom. Strangely, strangely do they read now.

But perhaps I have undervalued the relics which Mr. Brown offered recently to the museum at Keighley, and for which the custodians would not pay the price required. Keighley—pronounced Keathley—is only a short distance from Haworth, and it had been thought the good folks there would jump at the offer. They did not, as we know; and somehow I agreed with them, though my reason for so doing sprang from a cause they little guessed. Briefly, the friend who accompanied me to Haworth has in her own possession treasures far more precious and interesting than any Martha Brown had to bequeath, and these were given her by the original of 'Rochester' and 'Paul Emmanuel' himself. 'Paul Emmanuel' is still alive, and but recently delivered up, among other curiosities, a number of essays composed both by Charlotte and Emily Brontë while under his charge at Brussels, and corrected and emended by him as their master. These essays are upon no account to get into print, and it is easy to discern why. Although Charlotte's letters to her preceptor are, it is feared, by this time destroyed, no letter could breathe more transparently and more unconsciously the emotions by which that proud yet tender spirit was torn in twain, than does one of the short papers which I saw the other day at Ilkley. The elaborate epistle in which Monsieur Héger detailed his reasons for turning a deaf ear to all petitions on the subject was not required by me, after one brief perusal of the little essay. The refusal breathes a high and chivalrous tone, and with the motive one can find no fault; but, apart from publicity, it is sad to think that neither letters nor essays were treasured for their own sakes by the

Brussels schoolmaster. It almost makes one's blood boil to think of that warm, imaginative, hungry and thirsty girlish heart, beating against its bars, under-rated and misunderstood by the sprightly, amiable, but withal undiscerning and self-opinionated man who was its ideal.

Holding the faded manuscripts in my hand, a tremor thrilled through my veins. How, when, and with what feelings had they been written? The penmanship is daintily fine, small, and clear. They are in French, of course, and are finished off with feminine neatness and precision; the exquisite signature 'C. Brontë' being traced with the utmost delicacy in the upper left-hand corner, instead of being appended to the final words. They are full of subtle touches, and deep, impassioned utterances. It must be added that the subjects handled were such as admitted of these; and on such subjects could the author of 'Villette' be bald or cold?

But Monsieur Héger, calmly correcting and emending, understood nothing—still understands nothing of what lay beneath the surface. Even now, even after a lapse of over forty years, when the fame of Charlotte Brontë has echoed to the very ends of the earth, the two who should have been so proud of her, should have deemed themselves so much exalted by her, are simply at a loss to account for such an extraordinary and inexplicable state of affairs. The venerable pair—for both the late master and mistress of the celebrated school are living—have now retired to 'dwell among their own people'; they live in a small world of their own, tenderly cherished by sons and daughters, who are themselves grandfathers and grandmothers, several of whom have, moreover, achieved distinction in various walks in life. No aged parents are more devotedly revered, or more dutifully waited upon, than they; and but for his little 'kink'—if I may use an old Scotch word—about Charlotte Brontë, I should say that, in talent, sense, and acumen, they seldom meet their equals. But regarding 'Jane Eyre' and its sister products Monsieur and Madame Héger purse their lips. They do not care to talk about them, nor their author. She was, in their eyes, only a shy, impulsive, affectionate, but somewhat over-sensitive and impressionable, young nursery governess, who learned nearly everything she knew while under their charge, and who should not have gone home and written tales about her good friends at Brussels.

Much better, infinitely better, would it have been if Charlotte had pursued her vocation as a teacher of youth—that vocation for

which she came to them to be perfected—than have so misused her time and talents. As for recalling any little traits of character, any little sayings or doings, any grave or gay idiosyncrasies—why, Charlotte Brontë was only a pupil among pupils, and, moreover, a pupil too reserved, too undemonstrative, too morbidly ungenial to have been either attractive as a child or charming as a woman.

I have seen the portraits of Monsieur and Madame Héger. They represent two such faces as one seldom sees; but of the two I prefer that of the wife. It is that of a calm, judicial, restful nature, capable of infinite patience and of strong endurance; but it is easy to conceive that with just such a nature Charlotte Brontë had nothing in common. In consequence, but scant justice is done to 'Madame Beck' at her hands. Doubtless each mistook the other; and while Madame wondered and sighed over the petulant outbursts of the incomprehensible English girl, Madame's own quieter, more gentle spirit, her toleration, forbearance, self-control and outward imperturbability, would in its turn be almost intolerable to one of Charlotte's temperament.

But Monsieur Héger is a figure of more general interest, therefore one word more regarding him. He is a bright, vain, handsome octogenarian, charming and delighting to charm, eager to talk, and as eager for an audience, as exacting of homage and subservience as in the days when school-girls trembled at his glance. Imagine him fifty years ago, and you can hardly go wrong in imagining a very fascinating personage; then recollect that fifty years ago or thereabouts the little Yorkshire nursery-governess took her first flight to Brussels, and there beheld 'Paul Emmanuel'—*et voilà tout!*

Haworth Church has been so much altered and 'improved' under the auspices of its present vicar that nearly every vestige of interest or romance has been 'improved' off the face of it. An ordinary marble slab in the wall records that the different members of the Brontë family repose in a vault at the other end of the building, and over the vault itself a small brass plate has the names of Charlotte and Emily Brontë engraven upon its face.

We had thought this had been all, when the deaf old sexton, who had been in vain endeavouring to elicit our admiration for a reredos presented by the vicar's wife (which, to my mind, made but poor amends for all her husband had swept away)—when the old fellow suddenly exclaimed, 'Well, there's the window!'

'The window! What window?'

Without waste of words, he jogged down a side aisle, and called a halt in front of a very handsome, small, stained-glass window, bearing this inscription:—‘In pleasant memory of Charlotte Brontë,’ put up by—whom do you think? *An American citizen!* There was no name, no indication given whereby the plain ‘American citizen’ might be identified; and it has actually been left to this unknown, noble-minded denizen of another country to erect the only spontaneous memorial which has so far been granted to the memory of one of England’s greatest female novelists!

Haworth Churchyard is full of grey, weather-beaten tablets, above which the storm-tossed alders sigh, and amongst which the leaves were dropping as we stood. Behind lies the open moor, not purple and heathery, but covered with short-cropped, starved-looking grass, occasionally intersected by the stone walls of the district. The nearest of these enclosures, lying at the back of the church and parsonage, would doubtless be the playground of the poor little motherless Brontës when first that sombre parsonage became their home. Through it, when older grown, they would ramble forth on solitary walks and thoughts intent. (Emily, we know, was an especial lover of such expeditions, and this field-path would be her only outlet.) Roads are few in the vicinity, and her only alternative would be that which traverses the main street of the village. We can hardly picture her making it her choice.

Leaving the little field, we passed the parsonage, whose rows of brand-new windows offered but little association with Tabby and her crew, and, without attempting to invade a quarter in which we had been assured we should meet with but little sympathy, we stood once more at the church gates, where also faced us, at a right angle, the open doorway of the Black Bull Inn.

The Black Bull Inn is still Brontë to the core. A kindly welcome was there for us, and true Yorkshire hospitality, more especially when the honoured name became our passport. Would we have our luncheon in Branwell Brontë’s little back parlour? It would be ready in a few minutes, and meantime—and meantime? We were only too glad to hearken to anything and everything the good soul who preceded us had to tell. So this was poor young Brontë’s favourite resort?

‘That was his chair,’ she said simply, and pointed to a tall, old Chippendale arm-chair, with a quaintly-carved ‘fiddle’ back, and square seat, set edgewise. ‘That was his chair, and in that

corner it always stood. You see it is a nice corner, between the fireplace and the window; and there he used to sit, and sit'—(alas, poor Branwell!)—‘and when he had been sitting longer than maybe he should ha' been, Charlotte would be heard out at the door there’ (pointing along the dark, stone passage to the front entrance), ‘asking after him, an' if he were in the parlour? And he would hear her voice, and he would up wi' this window, and be out of it like a flash of lightning.’ (It was a broad, low casement, opening upon an inn yard, whose jutting stone walls were well fitted for concealment.) ‘So that when Charlotte came in to look for him,’ continued our narrator, ‘she would see nowt, d'ye see? And our folks they would know nowt, i' course. But Branwell, he were round the corner, down i' the yard yonder; and as soon as she were gone, he jumps through the window again—you can open it easily from the outside—an' back to his chair, an' she never the wiser. It would be dark too, maybe.’

As the quiet words fell upon our ears the bygone scene stole upon our vision.

We could hear the roar of the wind, and the sharp snap of the hailstones on the panes, as the winter night set in, coarse and wild, without. We could see the snugness, the warmth, the comfort within.

Thus, the temptation.

Then, the loving, anxious voice upon its quest.

Then, the stratagem.

Far, far too near to the bare, unkindly walls of the poor parsonage had been that seductive doorway. It had never been out of reach, not even on the rudest night. It had never been out of the hapless boy's path.

And the low-roofed, well-built, cosy dwelling had never been dull nor desolate, never aught but tempting and alluring. Instinctively his steps had turned its way. But for it the world of mind might have been the richer.

As we gazed, a silence fell upon the little room. It had been the haunt of genius, even though—sorrowful thought!—genius had passed that way to ruin.

What had Haworth to show after this?

L. B. WALFORD.

The Lieutenant.

'YES,' said the captain reflectively; 'I took a lot of saving. It's given me faith for these fellows.'

He waved his hand towards the row of sleeping men; and the lieutenant followed his glance. They were standing in the 'dossing-room' of one of the Salvation Army shelters, where supper, bed, and breakfast could be obtained at the reasonable charge of fourpence; and it was not so much the faces before him, haggard and unkempt often, but clean, and softened by sleep, that impressed on the captain the need of salvation for 'these fellows,' as his recollection of them two hours before, hungry, clamorous, and unwashed. Slumbering in the long, narrow, cushioned boxes, with the uniform brown hides thrown over them, they looked picturesque, and even oddly peaceful, now.

'I daresay there's not one of them,' said the captain, always in an undertone, 'that the Lord would have as much difficulty with as He had with me. Why, when I was a tiny lad, and my brother and I had apples given us, I used always to take the little apple, purely for the sake of making them think I was unselfish. They pointed me out as an example, and there I was swelling with pride. Always pondering on how to cut a good moral figure, I was. Just give me a character for self-sacrifice, and wild horses wouldn't drag it from me. That's the worst kind of fellow to save, and He was twelve years about it; and sometimes I doubt if it's finished yet. I've hung on to acts of self-denial till I've compelled others to act selfishly. 'Tis a terrible temptation that. Why it's better to do wrong and have done with it, than be always hankering after your own salvation. Brother Judd was in the right—you remember Brother Judd—when he said in camp-meeting: 'If I've lost my soul, I'll go and save some other fellow's.' And maybe some of these chaps is capable of a fine act

without so much as thinking about it, that I would go and do with any of them; but then all the way there and back I'd have a voice one side of me saying: "Now, Brooke, give God *all* the glory;" and another voice the other: "Yes, yes, Brooke, but save yourself a little bit out." The complexity of my motives is a great stumbling-block to me at times. I've had to give up and say: "Lord, here's the act, and why I've done it I don't know; but Thou knowest, and whatever becomes of my motives I'd like Thee to use it for Thy service." That's the only source of peace, brother.'

'Ay,' said the lieutenant, nodding soberly. He was a man of fewer and slower words than the captain, but with a peculiarly gentle and kindly face.

'I don't believe you were ever tempted in that way, brother,' said the captain, looking at him admiringly. 'You live——'

'Too near the Lord,' he was going to say; but something in the other's unconscious face arrested him.

'Why, yes,' said the lieutenant slowly. 'I've been tempted to take the glory—frequent. But I'd sooner the Lord had it, arter all; for the world knoweth Him not.'

'There's some of these,' he continued after a pause, 'as I believe literly knows their Bibles by art; and yet they'll come in reeling drunk, and have to be put out again. The inward witness, that's what's lacking. You saw the man who came in last?'

The captain nodded.

'He's a barrister,' said the lieutenant, very low. 'Said he was making his fortune at the bar, when the temptation to drink overcame him. Said it was too late to begin afresh. I said it was never too late to begin afresh in the strength of God; but I think maybe he's a bit of the pride of intellect. The plan of salvation, that's too simple.'

'So 'twas for me,' said the captain crisply. 'It took me twelve years. I sympathise with that fellow.'

A sudden laugh in the room, that was stifled quickly, startled them both. Could it have come from the barrister? They glanced at him sharply; but to all appearance the barrister, with his uncut, rumpled hair falling about his forehead, was as fast asleep as the rest. Nevertheless, they had their suspicions.

'It's time to turn in,' said the captain gravely. 'Good-night, lieutenant.'

The next morning, while the barrister was eating his bread

and drinking his coffee with a leisurely air, the lieutenant observed him, and came to the conclusion that most likely they were right in their conjecture. The barrister would have been handsome, with his curly fair hair and good-natured grey eyes, if he had not looked so dissipated. Certainly he had the manners of a gentleman, and, ragged and unkempt, he left the shelter that morning with a nod and careless greeting to the lieutenant that seemed appropriate to some fashionable hotel. The lieutenant looked after him, laying mental snares for the saving of his soul.

'Looks a regular West-end swell, don't he?' he said, turning to the captain, with his gentle laugh. The captain was not in charge of the shelter, but his room was close by, and as of late, his brother officers had been somewhat anxious about the lieutenant's physical, as distinct from his spiritual welfare, the captain found time to run in and look after him, morning, noon, and night, in the midst of his own crowded days.

'There's many,' said the captain, 'in silks and satins who are in far worse case. This poor chap's sin has taken the only form they understand—that of losing his money; and they all turn their backs upon him. That's the way of the world, but not the way of the Army, praise the Lord! Have you spoken to him about his soul again, brother?'

'Well, no,' said the lieutenant apologetically. 'It struck me he was one of those we must catch with guile. Maybe you'll have a word with him to-night, if he comes again.'

'I will,' said the captain.

But it was many nights before Aylmer—it was the barrister's true name—came again; and when he came he was distinctly more ragged and disreputable. But he came early, and captain and lieutenant had the opportunity they wished for.

'Brother,' said the captain mildly but firmly, 'you don't look as if your present plan of life suited you. Hadn't you better try the Lord's plan?'

'Really,' said Aylmer courteously, sitting down on one of the boxes not yet turned into a bed, 'I haven't the remotest idea.'

'Will you hear it?' said the captain, taking out his little Bible.

'If you'll excuse me,' said Aylmer hastily, 'I would much rather not.'

'Brother,' said the captain, 'you've sought happiness in worldly pleasures and not found it, and you think the search is hopeless. I'm not going to preach to you against your will, but

you may find true happiness yet; for I've found it, and it took me twelve years.'

'Thanks,' said Aylmer. 'But I daresay it isn't of much consequence,' he added lightly, 'whether I find it or not.'

'There's a great hereafter, brother,' returned the captain decidedly and promptly; and the lieutenant's slow, gentle voice echoed:

'Brother, there's a great hereafter.'

Aylmer looked at them both, and suddenly broke into a laugh.

'I hope there is,' he said. 'The present doesn't amount to much.'

'Are you prepared to meet it, brother?' persisted the captain.

'Yes,' returned Aylmer with sudden sharpness. 'I'm prepared to meet anything—but life. Now are you satisfied?'

'No,' said the captain. 'Far from it. But I've said my say, brother, and I'll leave you in peace, if peace you call it.'

He turned to a new-comer, but the lieutenant lingered.

'Maybe,' he said deprecatingly, 'you'd like a smoke. We've smoking in a downstairs room I'll show you. And I'm no smoker myself, but I've got a bit of bacca handy, if you'll make free with it.'

'You keep tobacco for the benefit of the dossers,' said Aylmer curiously. 'That is very good-natured of you.'

The lieutenant looked half-embarrassed, and Aylmer felt that he had used a wrong adjective.

'It isn't in the fourpence,' he said, smiling.

'Why, no,' said the lieutenant with an answering smile. 'Maybe not.'

'Then I'll have a smoke gladly,' said Aylmer, 'and many thanks. You look as if you knew what it is to be hard up.'

'Bless you!' said the lieutenant, 'I've been 'ard up all my life. Comes more natural to me than it does to you, sir.'

'You don't deserve it, however,' said Aylmer involuntarily, 'as I do.'

'I think, maybe,' replied the lieutenant mildly, 'there's not much difference between men's deservings, if it isn't for the grace of God. But that's the forbidden subject, isn't it? And now if you'll allow me I'll show you the smoking-room.'

What was it in Aylmer that won on the lieutenant, till he said, in a puzzled way, and disregarding all circumstantial evidence, that Aylmer was not far from the kingdom? He did not know, any more than Aylmer knew, why the lieutenant won on

him: yet in their sentences the same thought passed through the mind of each:

‘He’s such a gentleman.’

‘Does it matter,’ said Aylmer the next morning, ‘if I come again to-night?’

‘You’ll be very welcome,’ said the lieutenant with quiet sincerity. ‘Good morning, brother. God bless you!’

With which unusual benediction ringing in his ears, Aylmer went into the City, a very briefless barrister. But at night, having somehow amassed fourpence, and no more, he returned, and was received by the lieutenant with a cordial grasp of the hand and look of welcome, and wondered how long it was since anyone had shaken hands with him like that. For several nights more he came, always reading his own especial greeting in the lieutenant’s face. Then again there was a break; and the lieutenant looked for him vainly, and somehow missed him. He was different from the rest.

At last, one night, later than usual, the well-known figure entered. Aylmer had ascended the stairs quietly and steadily; nevertheless the lieutenant, who was accustomed to this manœuvre on the part of drunken men, gave him a doubtful glance, before his cordial ‘Good-night, brother.’

‘I’m not your brother!’ said Aylmer thickly, and with a savage oath.

A tumult arose among the dossers, who many of them had known the lieutenant long, and, in their wild way, loved him.

‘He’s half-seas over. Turn him out, lieutenant; we’ll give you a hand!’

Half-a-dozen strong fellows rose at once; but the lieutenant waved them back.

‘You’re not yourself to-night,’ he said to Aylmer soothingly. ‘Sit down a bit.’

What Aylmer’s disordered brain made of the kindly invitation there is no knowing; but what he did was this. Without a second’s warning, he knocked the lieutenant down. Then, partially sobered already, he turned on his heel.

He had the advantage of the other dossers in being close to the door; and he passed through swiftly. But a savage howl rose, and a dozen of them were after him. There was only one voice that could possibly stop them, and that voice they heard. The lieutenant was staggering to his feet, and stood between them and the door.

'Wait a bit, boys,' he said, in his gentle, deprecating voice. 'You've some of you been the worse for drink, as he was. 'Tis my quarrel.'

'Take my place, brother,' he added anxiously, to a sub-officer who entered just then, bewildered at Aylmer's sudden exit; and he was gone. Quite oblivious of the fact that his face was cut and bleeding, he ran down the dusky stairs, and into the street. There, just turning a corner, was Aylmer's retreating figure. What direction was he going in, with such quick and steady steps? The lieutenant breathed a prayer, and hurried after him.

Partially sobered by seeing the lieutenant, one of the best fellows he had ever known, lying at his feet, the cool night air did the rest for Aylmer, who, in one of the moments of vivid awakening men have, suddenly knew, or thought he knew, what he really wanted. A sense of freedom, almost joy, woke in him at the thought that he could fling away a life so utterly worthless, as he would have flung away some baneful thing. It seemed no wrong he was about to do; the thought that it was cowardly to die was obliterated for him by the thought that it was cowardly to live—like this. Words were surging in his mind, over and over:

'And in the great flood wash away my sin.'

He was aware that he meant to do something that would change all, and only feared the failure of his courage.

'Oh God, let me go through with it,' he prayed. And so he came to the bridge, moderating his pace for fear of attracting suspicion; and entering one of the lonely recesses, paused an instant, looking over, and heard the water plashing underneath. But he dared not stay to listen. He sprang upon the stone bench, was springing on—it was over—no, some one caught him back. Two arms had grasped him, and presently he was standing on the ground again, confronting his deliverer, and hearing the tide, to which all this mattered nothing, plashing quietly on.

A spectral-looking figure it was that stood before him, with streaks of blood on its face, which otherwise was a queer ashy-white to the very lips. Then Aylmer realised that it was the lieutenant, come to look after him. And he also realised, as perhaps no one hitherto had done sufficiently, that it was time for some one to look after the lieutenant. He sprang up.

One apprehensive hand the lieutenant held out, but Aylmer stopped him.

'I'm not going to do it again,' he said decidedly. 'You're ill—take my arm. I'll get you—oh, hang it, you won't take brandy.'

'I've been like it before,' gasped the lieutenant feebly; but Aylmer led him, by very slow steps, into the nearest shop, whose owner, fortunately, was a good, buxom woman, who, like everyone else, knew the lieutenant.

'Bless us,' she said, 'he do look ill!'

'Tell me where the nearest doctor is,' said Aylmer impatiently.

'Just a street off—why, Polly, Polly! show him, child—Dr. Morris; never mind your hat.'

They were back in ten minutes—Polly, Aylmer, and the doctor, a man with a shrewd, pleasant face, who stepped up quietly to the lieutenant's sofa as if, without seeing him, he knew all about it. The lieutenant looked up, and, seeing Aylmer, smiled faintly.

'Well, my man,' said the doctor, scribbling something on a piece of paper as he spoke. 'You army fellows overdo it, you know. Here, my girl'—

He handed the paper to Polly.

'Take it to the nearest chemist,' he said, 'and come straight back with what he gives you.'

'You overdo it,' he repeated, turning to the lieutenant again. 'How do you feel now?'

'I'm at peace,' said the lieutenant. 'Bless His name!'

'At peace? Oh!' said the doctor. 'Well, I daresay you are—but physically, you know—that's my matter. You haven't felt quite strong, have you, for some time?'

'I've thought,' said the lieutenant, with the queer gasp that Aylmer had noted before.

'Don't go on when you feel like that,' said the doctor hastily. 'Take your time, man; I've plenty. We'll wait a bit.'

The lieutenant smiled gratefully, and paused. When he next spoke, his voice was very faint, nor did he trouble to reiterate his former words, but went on—

'As there might be suthing wrong about my art.'

'Ah,' said the doctor quietly. 'How long have you felt like that? No hurry, man, no hurry—here's the medicine.'

He undid a small tin that Polly had brought, with deft hands, and gave a spoonful of the contents to the lieutenant.

'Nothing intoxicating,' he said cheerily; 'I saw your Blue Ribbon. How long did you say?'

'I can't tell exactly,' replied the lieutenant. 'May be three years—may be four.'

'Ah!' said the doctor. 'Let's feel your pulse.'

He sat down by the couch, and took the patient's hand in his. The lieutenant's pulse was throbbing very quickly, very faintly, and had a way of missing beats without giving notice, and flickering, like a lamp that is going out.

'I think,' said the doctor presently, 'I'd stay here to-night.'

'That he shall,' said the buxom shopkeeper. 'He's welcome as daylight to all I have, and I wish it was as much again.'

'They'll be wondering what's come of me,' said the lieutenant gratefully.

'Your friend here will take them word,' replied the doctor. 'I really think you'd better not try.'

'You mean I'm dying, sir, don't you?' said the lieutenant simply. There was such a complete absence of fear in his face that the doctor only said gravely, 'Yes.'

There was a pause; and then Aylmer, looking down, saw the lieutenant's eyes fixed on him with a look of passionate entreaty. He stooped, and whispered something in his ear. No one heard what it was; but the dying man's face grew peaceful. He lay silent for a time; and then the doctor, bending down, saw that the lieutenant was promoted.

MAY KENDALL.

The Origin of Death.

AMONG the traditions and legends which time has consecrated, and which have been woven into the texture of barbaric and civilised religions, the common essence of which is the explanation of everything, those on the origin of life and death have large place. The events that touched man closely in his personal surroundings were the subjects of his earliest guesses, and coloured his interpretation of more remote phenomena.

But the explanations which satisfy an uncritical and pre-scientific age no longer pass unchallenged by an age which is content rather to confess ignorance than to accept theories which do not square with facts. And, so far as the origin of life is concerned, the veil remains unlifted. Schwann's discovery of the cell as the basis and theatre of vital function transferred the problem of life's beginning from the organism to the unit of which it is built up, and it seemed as if the secret lay within grasp. But, as Dr. Burdon Sanderson remarks in his Address to the Biological Section of the British Association at its recent meeting, that which has served to explain so much remains unexplained. 'Our measurements are more exact, our methods finer, but these very methods bring us to close quarters with phenomena which, although within reach of exact investigation, are, as regards their essence, involved in a mystery which is the more profound the more it is brought into contrast with the exact knowledge we possess of surrounding conditions.'

That knowledge is, however, not dumb respecting the origin of death. There are differences of opinion as to the causes whereby death has come into the world, but there is common agreement as to its universality. It is concerning this that we have erred. There are living things, as the sand by the seashore innumerable, which have escaped, and will continue to escape, the common lot, at least until a frozen or frizzled earth shall make all life upon it impossible. They are not indestructible, for obviously severe injury, enemies, subjection to intense heat, to poisons, and other

agencies, may destroy them. Neither do they escape that molecular death which is a condition of life everywhere, in the destruction of old material and its replacement by new material. What is meant is, that since the beginning of their life on this planet that life has known no death by senile decay or by definite arrest. Among them there is not, as there is among other organisms, procession after procession of mortal generations; so long as the conditions which are necessary for their life are fulfilled they continue to live, and they thus carry the power of an endless life in themselves. Unlike Tithonus, to whom the gods gave immortality, but withheld from him the blessing of eternal youth, they sigh not for 'the lot of happier men that have the power to die,' for, while all else waxes old, 'as doth a garment,' they remain the same, fresh with the freshness of unfading juvenescence. Well might they, had they but mouths, smile at the claims of long descent which we higher organisms, in our pride of birth, are ever vaunting; as it is, we come and go, shadows pursuing shadows, and these organless automata reckon not, for before *Homo pithecus* they were. If not, like Wisdom herself, brought forth 'before the mountains,' many of these amongst our mightiest ranges are their juniors, uplifted from waters where they flourished eons ago. Untroubled by anxious search after an *elixir vite*, by haunting dread of death, or by melancholy born of dyspepsia, for them, not by them, has been solved the riddle of the painful earth; to them given the glory at which Virtue aims, of 'going on' and 'not to die.' Only one drawback have they to their immortal life; they do not know that it is theirs; could they know it, that moment would it be taken from them.

But let us advance from the vague and general to the precise and special, and describe in detail what manner of things these are.

Everybody who is interested in his ancestry knows that living things are grouped under two main divisions—the one-celled and the many-celled. The one-celled among animals include the lowest and simplest forms, and the many-celled among animals include all organisms from sponges upward to human beings.

Now it is the one-celled which alone are immortal, and the evidence of this lies in their structure and process of multiplication. Both characteristics are well shown in the *Amœba*, which may be taken as a type of all unicellular forms.

This organism is a minute, jellylike, irregularly-shaped particle of granular protoplasm, with faint approach towards unlike-

ness in parts in an external layer and in a nucleus toward the centre. It lives in water, and is constantly changing its shape, whence its name, moving about by pushing out blunt pseudopods or false feet. It takes in food and ejects undigested particles at any point of its body; in brief, every part does everything, performing all the functions of life as fully as the higher animals, the differences between them and it being in their highly specialised response to surroundings. For it also responds to these, the response taking the simple form of change of shape, in which lies the germ of the complex nervous systems of many-celled organisms. Sometimes, under certain conditions—as of drought, frost, and other adverse influences—it dries up, investing itself in a cyst or wall—a process known as encystment—during which it continues in a torpid state, resuming active life when favourable conditions recur. In brief, its state is then one of sleep, ‘the ape of death.’ It sets at defiance the rules of arithmetic in multiplying by division. When, by the assimilation of food, it has reached a certain size, it divides equally at the kernel, or nucleus. The protoplasm distributes itself around each nucleus as the two part company to grow and divide again in like manner, and so on *ad infinitum*, each half being a separate individual exactly like its fellow, and passing through the same stages of growth and fission. There is nothing novel in this description of the behaviour of one-celled organisms, whether they be animals or plants; the novelty lies in the inference deduced therefrom, that death is not, as has hitherto been commonly assumed, an inevitable attribute of living matter, but that it has been acquired as an adaptation which first appeared when, in consequence of a certain complexity of structure, an unending life became disadvantageous to the species. This theory has been expounded and supported with skill and clearness by a distinguished biologist, Dr. Aug. Weismann, in some papers on the Duration of Life and on Life and Death, forming part of a remarkable volume, entitled *Essays upon Heredity and Kindred Biological Problems*, recently issued by the Clarendon Press. Dr. Weismann contends that the process of multiplication by fission does not involve the death of either part. There is no cessation of vital functions; each part starts on an independent career, without break of continuity, and possessed of the same constitution. ‘There are,’ Dr. Weismann remarks, ‘no grounds for the assumption that the two halves of an amœba are differently constituted internally, so that, after a time, one of them will die, while the other continues to live. Such an idea is

disproved by a recently discovered fact. It has been noticed in one of the foraminifera, and in other low animals of the same group, that when division is almost complete, and the two halves are only connected by a short strand, the protoplasm of both parts begins to circulate, and for some time passes backwards and forwards between the two halves. A complete mingling of the whole substance of the animal, and a resulting identity in the constitution of each half, is thus brought about before the final separation' (p. 26).

Neither can we say that the parent animal has died, unless it is also maintained that the man of to-day is no longer the same individual as the boy of twenty years ago. In the growth of man neither the structure nor the components of structure remain precisely the same; the material is constantly changing. But the individuality persists, and this holds equally good of the primordial *amœba*, as of somewhat more highly organised one-celled animals, such as the infusoria, which possess a rudimentary mouth and short gullet, through which food and oxygen pass to the body-cavity.

If, then, the one-celled organisms are immortal, how came the many-celled, which have been developed from them, to lose this power of unending life? Obviously, through differences of structure; they 'kept not their first estate,' but must needs be other than they were. With the clustering of single cells together there necessarily resulted differences of position, some being outside and some inside; in other words, they were nearer to or farther from the influences of the surroundings or 'environment.' Thereby arose differences of function. Their position determined the work which they had to do, which work, speaking broadly, is of two kinds; taking in and assimilating food, and reproduction. Hence it came to pass that the cells, after infinitely slow development of these functions—the function always determining the structure of the organ which performs it—fell into two groups; somatic or body-cells, and germ-cells. The body-cells, to which the work of nutrition fell, ultimately formed the larger group, and became, by slow degrees, more and more modified as their functions were subdivided. As these changes took place, the power of reproducing various parts of the organism was lost (although among certain lower animals this power is still retained in some degree), while the power of reproducing the whole individual became concentrated in the germ-cells alone.

These cell-unlikenesses were brought about by the action of

natural selection, the agent which determines the fate and fortune of life-forms. From the dawn of life the structures best adapted to surrounding conditions have been victors; whatever features have proved useful have been seized upon by natural selection and secured dominance. The enormous mass of the lower forms have persisted to this day, because the balance established between them and their surroundings has remained unaltered. But wherever the balance between living things and their surroundings has been disturbed, new demands have been made upon them, to which they responded, or, failing that response, perished. Hence it is in the first complexity of structure, the first departure from simplicity, that the seeds of death were sown.

For that death becomes a necessity. So far as its occurrence by natural causes is concerned, we know that as organisms get older (although this applies more to animals than to plants, in which the cells, as they become lignified or converted into wood, are overlaid with new cells) their power of work and of renewal is lessened. The cells which form the vital fabric of tissues are worn by continual use; the waste exceeds the repair, and death ultimately ensues 'because a worn-out tissue cannot for ever renew itself, and because a capacity for increase by means of cell-division is not everlasting, but finite.' Why there should be this limit to cell-division we cannot say, but it is clear that with the modifications of organs according to the work which they discharge there results a subtler structure which is less easy to repair and is shorter of duration. The one-celled organisms have found salvation in simplicity.

We are, therefore, driven to the conclusion that since there is, *primâ facie*, no reason why growth should be limited, or why function should come to an end, death must have been brought about by natural selection, which determines survival or extinction from the standpoint of utility alone. There needs no showing that it is to the advantage of the species that individuals should die. Their immortality would be harmful all round; nay, impossible, unless vigour remain unimpaired, and the multiplication of offspring does not overtake the means of subsistence. 'For it is evident,' as Mr. Russel Wallace remarks in a note which he has contributed to Dr. Weismann's essay, 'that when one or more individuals have provided a sufficient number of successors, they themselves, as consumers of nourishment in a constantly increasing degree, are an injury to those successors.

Natural selection, therefore, weeds them out, and in many cases favours such races as die almost immediately after they have left successors, as e.g., among the male bees, the drone perishing while pairing, death being due to sudden nervous shock.

In dealing with this question of the origin of death a distinction should be drawn between the body-cells and the germ-cells. While the functions and results of the cells which build up and nourish the body are limited to the life of the individual of which they are the sum-total, no such limit can be imposed upon the germ-cells. Those which have fulfilled their function are endowed with actual immortality, because of the persistence of their influence through unnumbered generations. If in the natural death of the individual the germ-cells must also die, that natural death becomes a cause of accidental death to the germ-cells, which are thereby prevented from exercising their functions of reproduction.

And, as the death of the individual becomes a necessity, being of advantage to the species, so is it with the duration of the individual life. Although there is some relation between size and longevity, the duration of the period of growth and length of life being, speaking generally, longest in the largest animals, there is no fixed relation between the two. The largest organisms live the longest, some trees reaching an age of six thousand years, and some animals, as whales, several centuries. And, after maturity is reached, larger animals require longer time than smaller animals to secure the preservation of the species. The explanation of this, as pointed out by both Leuckart and Herbert Spencer, is that 'the absorbing surface of an animal only increases as the square of its length, while its size increases as the cube; and it therefore follows that the longer an animal becomes the greater will be the difficulty experienced in assimilating any nourishment over and above that which it requires for its own needs, and therefore the more slowly will it reproduce itself.' We, however, find corresponding duration of life among animals of very different size. For example, the toad and the cat live as long as the horse, the crayfish as long as the pig, and the pike and carp as long as the elephant. In an interesting appendix, from which these and the following facts are quoted, Dr. Weismann cites the case of a sea-anemone which lived not less than sixty-six years. It was placed by Sir John Dalyell in a small glass jar in the Edinburgh Botanical Gardens in 1828, being then, as comparisons with other individuals reared from

the egg proved, fully seven years old. It died a natural death in August, 1887.

The rate at which an organism uses up its energy determines, in some degree, its length of life. But although inertness, as hibernating animals and pensioners show, promotes longevity, an active life is not necessarily a short one, unless, as folks say, the candle is burnt at both ends. Where we find activity and brevity of life, this is due to the quicker attainment of the twofold purpose of life, the reaching maturity and the propagation of offspring. Birds are prominent examples of rapid energy-users, but knowledge of the ages which they reach in a wild state is very difficult to obtain and impossible to verify. A pair of eider ducks were observed to make their nest in the same place for twenty years, and it is believed that these birds sometimes reach the age of nearly one hundred years. A cuckoo, recognised by a peculiar note in its call, was heard in the same forest for thirty-two consecutive years. Humboldt tells of a parrot, concerning which the Indians said that they could not understand it because it spoke the language of an extinct tribe! Captive eagles and vultures have lived above a century, and Dr. Weismann refers to the case of a falcon which reached the age of one hundred and sixty-two years. Among insects the range of life-duration differs widely, from the imago of certain may-flies, which lives only four or five hours, to the celebrated queen ant which Sir John Lubbock kept alive for fifteen years, and which continued to lay fertile eggs, although there had been no male in the nest for fourteen years previously. But such longevity is confined to the females, which have to nourish their young until birth, a long life for the males being useless to the species.

This is the key to the whole question. Length of life is only ruled in minor degree by size and constitution; it is the needs of the species which determine it. In the larger number of life-forms the service which the parents render is at an end when offspring are produced in sufficient number to secure the species from extinction; then natural selection gets rid of the parents as cumberers of the ground. It is only where the duty of looking after the offspring falls to the parent that we find life prolonged beyond the reproductive period, as in the case of all mammals and birds.

Put into a few words, the sum of what has been said is as follows:—

Death is not an essential attribute of living matter, because one-celled organisms never die a natural death.

Many-celled forms have a natural limit of life.

As many-celled forms are descended from one-celled forms this limit of life must have been acquired when the cells became modified into body-cells and germ-cells.

This modification was brought about by the action of natural selection, which has also determined the duration of the individual life.

That duration does not extend beyond the needs of the species.

Although death has entered into life, there has been no break in life-continuity since its appearance on the earth. The highest life-form is derived from the lowest life-form through an unbroken chain. But we know life only as derived from life; we can assert nothing concerning its beginning; we know that it had a beginning, and that it will have an end.

EDWARD CLODD.

At the Sign of the Ship.

THE time has arrived for a *Prospective Review*. In an age when new works are abused before they are published because the critic does not like the uncle of the author, it is high time that fictions should be censured before they are written. The celebrated authors of the day, poets and novelists, will illustrate 1890 (that is if the constitution of society endures) much as they have adorned the previous years of our perishable existence. For example.

* * *

Mr. William Black's *Machinahanich* will begin at Henley, where a literary gentleman will entertain, with abundance of humour and champagne, a crowd of guests, including a beautiful but irresponsible daughter of our revolted American colonies. There will be a boat race, in which Balliol will be bumped by Sidney Sussex, and there will be twilight, cows meditatively standing in the water under the shadowy elms, celadon and daffodil lights on the fords, and songs in italics, and in the Scotch language. A desire for the blessed Restoration of the Stuart dynasty will be lyrically expressed, and the fair daughter of the Western continent will play the banjo. A disagreeable person will fall out of a punt, and the party, after going round the Mull of Cantyre in a yacht, will occupy a shooting-lodge in Tiree. There will be sunsets, cuddy-fishing, and several salmon will be captured in a loch with circumstances of pleasing good taste. The chief gillie will be Machinahanich, and he will sing Gaelic boat songs, and say 'whateffer.' Machinahanich will cherish a private still, and a grudge against the disagreeable person, who, on his side, will have a passion for the Daughter of the West. But Machinahanich will keep the inner tracks, and, after a midnight attack by crofters on the shooting-lodge, will conceal the young lady (and *chaperon*) in the cave where he keeps his private still. They are all rescued

by an American torpedo boat with a dynamite shell on board, after which *la belle Américaine* will return smiling to her native shores, and Machinahanich will emigrate into a novel of Mr. Barrie's, where he will edit a high-class Liberal newspaper.

* * *

Mr. Walter Besant's new romance will be called *Fair and Foul*, and it will begin with the adventures of a lovely but penniless daughter of a country clergyman, who shall live in St. Mary Axe, and eke out a livelihood by taking in type-writing, while her sister acts as *clairvoyante* to a travelling mesmerist. And the *clairvoyante* shall be weird, and pale, and transparent, and the type-writer shall be plump, and fair of flesh, and rosy. And both shall long to lay their heads against a manly bosom, and no bosom shall be found for them. And the type-writer, in copying some political papers, shall make the most interesting discoveries, and shall be tempted to sell them to a New Journalist abounding in all evil things and in bad grammar. And the *clairvoyante* shall be tested by the Psychical Society, and much fun shall be made of the same; and the New Journalist shall come and go, working evil after his kind. And he shall steal the type-writer's political secrets, and the *clairvoyante* shall behold him from afar, and shall set forth to pursue him with two robust and sceptical young psychical researchers, both Cambridge men, one of them from Australia. And they shall fall upon that New Journalist, and shall beat him till the going down of the sun, and shall clear the character of the *clairvoyante* from the charge of being a humbug. And she shall marry one of the young Cambridge men, and the other shall take the fair type-writer as his bride to the new paradise of fiction, Australia, where it seems to be thought that peace and plenty reign, and there are no slums. And there is plenty of old-fashioned kissing and delightful shopping, and the eye-glass of the New Journalist is broken, and there is a poet who makes a capital butt.

* * *

Mr. Rider Haggard's new tale, *On the Amber Route*, narrates the adventures of a prehistoric child of the extreme North, say about 1800 B.C. He is found as a baby by the savage amber-seeker of the Baltic, washed ashore after a night of storm among the foam and the foam-flecked amber. He grows up on the Baltic shores, endowed with prodigious muscles, courage, yellow hair, and taste for making love. He fights dragons in the fens, and pirates from

the sea, he is lucky enough to watch a battle between the two last mastodons, and himself shoots a pterodactyl with a flint-headed arrow. At last he goes South with an amber caravan up the Elbe, down the Danube, and across Hungary. On the Elbe he encounters the ship *Argo*, with Jason and his crew, who happen to be returning to Greece by that route; he wins the heart of Medea, but, being entangled with a young lady in the amber caravan, he escapes her enchantments. Terrible scenes of magic between the rival ladies. After a single combat, in which he fells Jason, he marches South, following the cranes. Finally, after an immense deal of slaughter, he reaches the Ægean with the amber, is caught by Sidonian merchant men, sold for a slave, wanders on the Mediterranean, and reaches Egypt just in time to be in at the last fight between the Egyptians and the Shepherd Kings. Here he performs mighty deeds with his palæolithic hatchet such as no other man can lift, becomes captain of the guard of Thebes, and, being unable to return to the Baltic, marries the daughter of the King of the Hittites. By particular request there will be no lions in this novel, but it is hoped that the mastodons, and a fight with Grendel in a marsh, also a battle with a ghost in a barrow, will supply the necessary amount of entertainment.

* * *

Among the numerous lovers of verse (perhaps there are some two thousand of them) few books will exert more passionate interest than *New Poems* by quite a new writer. These are lyric. No blank verse is admitted by this fresh singer, who, in a brief but trenchant preface, expresses his (or her) disdain for plays, and long poems in general. We are permitted to publish one or two extracts:—

AT SUNDOWN.

*O tendril of ivy and tangle of tree,
Wild are the banks of my ain countrie!
The sun is sinking low in the west,
A golden ball o'er the mountain crest;
Shafts of light pierce the moorland's breast.
Wild are the banks of my ain countrie.*

*O purple of heather and silver of sea,
Bright are the hues of my ain countrie!
A fairy knight rides out of the wold;
A lady's sleeve round his helm is rolled;
His coal-black charger is shod with gold,
Bright are the hues in my ain countrie,*

*O ripple of streamlet and murmur of bee,
Sweet are the sounds in my ain countrie!
He throws me, passing, a glance remote:
A wandering lark in the clouds afloat
Has stabbed my soul with its tender note.
Sweet are the sounds in my ain countrie.
O shadow of pinewood and silence of lea,
Cold falls the dew in my ain countrie!
The lovelight fades in the amber sky,
And grey mists over the forest fly;
We are alone, my heart and I.
Cold falls the dew in my ain countrie.*

* * *

Here is another excerpt:—

THE WAY TO BABYLON.

Comrade, now the dawn is nigh,
Light is veiling every star—
Pale against the paling sky
Gleams a pinnacle afar:
Where the earth and sky are one,
Comrade, it is Babylon.
Comrade, now the noonday blaze
Beats upon us as we go;
Yet I see a city's maze
Grey against the fiery glow,
Shadowy walls, and streams that run
'Neath the walls of Babylon.
Comrade, had we ever guessed
Half the weary miles between!
Now the sun is near the west,
Now the trees the city screen:
Ends the journey, long begun,
We are nearing Babylon.
Comrade, now the night grows late,
In the darkness, we must be
Very near the city gate,
Where is room for thee and me.
Rest we now till morning sun:
We shall wake at Babylon.

E. C. and M. K.

* * *

Mr. Howells and Mr. Cable, in collaboration, will charm us with *Carinthia's Young Men*. Carinthia is the daughter of a distinguished medium and inspirational lecturer, who departs rather hastily from a village in Louisiana, leaving Carinthia there, in pawn. She is only ten years old, and is rejected by the white folks—French Creoles, talking a mysterious lingo—but is brought up by Uncle Ned. He is a negro, with white wool, born long before the war; his grandmother was General Washington's nurse. All the characters in this part of the book speak in a dialect not comprehended of the people in *this* poor island. Carinthia becomes lady's maid in the family of an eloquent Presbyterian minister, who is translated to New York, where Carinthia keeps company with a young compositor. They sit on stoops, and ride in cars, and go to meeting, and improve their minds. In the cars a young English duke (the brute) refuses to give Carinthia his place, and is set on and cowhided by the compositor. Regret of compositor, when he finds that the young duke has, in fact, no legs, and could not behave with American gallantry. Carinthia, pitying the duke, allows her affection to waver a little, but, after an impassioned scene, refuses the ducal hand. The afflicted nobleman says it is 'a beastly shame,' and that America is 'a beastly country.' Carinthia, at odds with both her lovers, and indignant at these lordly criticisms, returns to Uncle Ned's, and the old unintelligible *patois* has its second innings. The compositor comes south, encounters Carinthia sitting on a stoop, and she ingenuously proposes to him. All ends happily, the compositor developing into a distinguished man of letters, and finally obtaining the post of United States Minister at St. Petersburg, where he meets Russian novelists, and has a lovely time, while the wit and breeding of Carinthia dazzle *attachés*. Uncle Ned dies happy, singing:

I'm gwine to glory
 In de old one-horse chay;
 Nigger nebber trouble
 'Bout the brambles on de way,

or some such devotional composition.

* * *

In Mr. Louis Stevenson's *Wandering Willie* it is all but certain that there will be no bad blind man with a walking-stick. When first met, as a sham leper in the *Black Arrow*, he ran away to sea, where he became Pew, and was later encountered, armed

with a pistol, on the moors of Mull. This time he is out of the story. Wandering Willie was a gangrel laddie, but came of gentle kin. A passion for low company and the penny whistle led him from the howf in the Cowgate across broad Scotland, and he was present at the Raid of the Reidswire, the Ruthven conspiracy, the starving of the Duke of Rothsay, the siege of St. Andrews by the French, and other events of interest. The main thread of the plot consists in Willie's reflections about life and literature, which are obstinately optimistic. Even in the Bottle Dungeon he is cheerful, and is rewarded by finding and deciphering, on the wall, a chart showing where the Gold Chain of Cuzco is buried. The chart was left by a Spanish captive, of the old Armada days, and by aid of it the hero is just about starting for Cuzco, when he unexpectedly learns that he is heir of the estates of Dunnawhuddy in Galloway. Here the narrative ends, a little abruptly; leaving the reader with an unappeasable desire to learn more about the Gold Chain of Cuzco. There are no bothering girls nor love-making in this absorbing romance. Mr. Stevenson's Scotch and his English are as perfect and original as ever; only the hypercritical will complain that the two idioms occasionally become a little mixed.

The civilised world, and the American pirate, will hear with interest that Mrs. Ward's new novel is to be styled *The New Polyeucte*. Many a cultured person in Chicago will ask who the old original Polyeucte was, and will find the answer in a drama by Pierre Corneille. The new Polyeucte, Walter St. John, is an Indian civil servant, home on leave. He is a gay young civil servant, and falls in love with Georgina Maidment, called Georgy, who is also lively, and particularly famed for her performances on the banjo, and her train of admiring elderly professors, philosophers, statesmen, artists, and literary men. The humours of these adorers are very justly discriminated, and they will, no doubt, be recognised as real persons by the aid of a little good will and a considerable dash of fancy. The scene in which Georgy rides the bucking mare in the hurdle race is particularly vivacious. Mr. St. John wins Georgy's hand, in the course of a pedestrian tour up the Langdale Pikes; the familiar features of these eminences are traced with a brilliant pencil. On returning to India, however, with his bride, Mr. St. John (after a series of mango trees and other miracles which *do* happen) is converted to Esoteric Buddhism. Here the central interest is rapidly

developed; the husband, both in and out of the Astral Body, having prolonged arguments with his sceptical wife. She becomes a nominal Buddhist, and has her husband's frame cremated after his apparent decease. Unluckily, he was not really dead, but only wandering about Thibet in the Astral Body. His annoyance on finding that his worldly body has been reduced to ashes. Regrets of Georgy, who, however, marries an enterprising Anglo-Indian journalist, declining to perform suttee. The Astral Body of the hero slowly melts away to distant music, with reflections on the evanescent nature of creeds and rituals. There is a background of festive society at Simla, against which the fate of the modern Polyeucte shines out in bizarre relief.

ANDREW LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following sums. Contributions received after December 4 will be entered in the February number:—

E. E. E. 5s. E. A. B. 10s. L. C. 10s. E. A. B. 3s. Elle 2s. 6d. H. G. Surbiton 30s. C. Surrey a parcel of boots. Mrs. Bosworth a parcel of shirts.

The Sisters have received 10s. from J. T. Smith.

Miss M. A. de Rougemont, 5l. 'Donna', 5l. Cooper's Court, omitted in the list in March,

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss. All communications should be addressed to

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